



NOVEMBER 2020

Volts & Jolts

Published monthly for the members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.
SERVING THE FOUR-COUNTY AREA OF MARSHALL, PENNINGTON, RED LAKE AND POLK
and a portion of the lands of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa



Employee Spotlight



Brandon Wiskow
Lineworker

Brandon Wiskow of Red Lake Falls was hired in June 2020 as a seasonal lineworker at Red Lake Electric. He spent his time at RLEC working between the two construction crews until mid-November 2020.

Brandon is a Lafayette High School graduate and attended lineworker school at Bismarck State College. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing and snowmobiling.

A couple fun facts about Brandon: His favorite movie is Step Brothers, his favorite sport is football, and his favorite family tradition is getting together for deer hunting.

⇒HAPPY⇒
Thanksgiving

From all of us at

Red Lake Electric Cooperative



**Red Lake Electric Cooperative will be closed
Thursday, Nov. 26, for Thanksgiving**

In case of an electrical outage or emergency,
call the after-hours phone number, 218-253-2200.

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OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President Randy Versdahl
Vice President Stacy Blawat
Secretary-Treasurer Mark Hanson
Directors Cecil Anderson,
Aaron Chervestad, Bonnie Christians,
Colette Kujava, Steve Linder, Peter Mosbeck

Stephanie Johnson General Manager

Steve Conely Manager of Electric
System Operations

Kelli Brateng Manager of Member Services

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Phone: (218) 253-2168
Toll-Free: 1-800-245-6068
Fax: (218) 253-2630



AFTER HOURS/OUTAGE CALLS 218-253-2200

Website: www.redlakeelectric.com
Email: info@redlakeelectric.com

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG 1-800-252-1166 or 811

MINNESOTA STATE ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS

Pennington and Marshall Counties:

Ronald Ditsch – 218-779-6758

Polk and Red Lake Counties:

George Stage – 701-306-3511

Any time you or an electrician does wiring or other electrical work at your home or farm, Minnesota state law requires a state wiring inspector to conduct a proper inspection of the work. A rough-in inspection must be made before any wiring is covered. A final inspection is also required. Please visit www.dli.mn.gov for more information. The inspectors can be reached week-day mornings between 7 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of Red Lake Electric Cooperative to enhance the quality of life for people of our service area by safely and consistently providing quality electric service and other valued services while holding our employees, our community and our environment in high regard.



Giving back to our community

by Stephanie Johnson

Over the years, you've probably heard or read about Red Lake Electric Cooperative's concern for our community. This is one of the core principles that sets cooperatives apart from other types of utilities and businesses. We've always taken this mission and responsibility to heart. It's who we are as a cooperative.

During the past few months, like so many of you, we've risen to meet new challenges and strengthen the safety net for our community, particularly for those who are most vulnerable. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've made numerous adjustments to programs and operations (28915 Kelly R. Brekke) to maintain business continuity while staying focused on the bigger mission of helping our consumer-members during this turbulent time.

Now, with the holidays fast approaching, these recent events have made me pause and think about the role we play in our community. While our purpose is to provide safe and reliable energy to you, the members we serve, we have a greater mission – to be a catalyst for good.

You're probably aware of our Operation Round Up program, where we take donations from generous members like you who have "rounded up" the amount due on their electric bill to help local nonprofit organizations. We also have a strong commitment to safety – not just for our employees, but for our community as well.

You'll also see our employees serving on local boards, coaching youth sports and volunteering at charitable events. Because when you work at a cooperative, you

understand how important a strong community is – after all, without you, the cooperative wouldn't exist.

We know that our core job is to keep the lights on, but our passion is our community. Because we live and work here, too, we want to make it a better place for all.

If there's anything we can do to help you – whether providing energy-saving advice to help lower your monthly bill or discussing payment plan options during these difficult times – please reach out to us at 218-253-2168 or toll free at 800-245-6068.

Concern for community is the heart and soul of who we are. And no matter what the future brings, you can count on your electric cooperative to care about you.

Annual meeting recap

Red Lake Electric Cooperative held its 82nd annual meeting Oct. 28 at the American Legion in Red Lake Falls, Minn. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, our meeting consisted of a business meeting, approval of last year's annual meeting minutes and verification of the incumbent directors. Even with the (22424 Kim M. Johnson) shortened meeting, our cooperative was able to conduct its annual business in a transparent and democratic manner, consistent with its bylaws and principles.

Bonnie Christians (District 1), Steve Linder (District 4) and Mark Hanson (District 5) were the unopposed incumbent directors that will serve your cooperative for another 3-year term. Congratulations!



From the office

Annual meeting

Red Lake Electric held its 82nd annual meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 28, at the American Legion in Red Lake Falls. President Randy Versdahl called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Congratulations to the three incumbent directors for being reelected to serve another 3-year term. Bonnie Christians of Gentilly (District 1) has been a director since 2002. Steve Linder of Oklee (District 4) was first elected in 2002. Mark Hanson of Thief River Falls (District 5) has served as director since 2005.



Bonnie
Christians



Steve
Linder



Mark
Hanson

Sales tax exemption

With the start of the heating season, we want to remind you that residential electric heat during the winter months, as well as electricity used in agricultural production, are exempt from Minnesota sales tax. If you currently have a sales tax exemption form on file with RLEC, you do not need to send us another; however, if you haven't given us a sales tax exemption form, please do so. You will find an exemption form in this issue of Volts & Jolts and on our website, or give us a call and we will send you one. If you have an off-peak meter, you already qualify for the sales tax exemption on your electric heat.

Off-peak meters

We currently have 90% of our meters changed to the new system – all that remain are off-peak meters. If you have an off-peak meter located inside your home or another building and our crews leave a note that we need to change the meter, please call to make arrangements (30403 Dale C. Berggren) to change that meter. If you look at your bill and you have a meter number that is only four (4) or five (5) digits long, you still have an old meter. All the new meter numbers have nine (9) digits. In order to continue to receive your off-peak rate, your meter will need to be replaced.

Holiday wishes

This is the time of year we are reminded to take the time to count our blessings, one of which is the opportunity to serve you! We wish you a wonderful holiday season!



The 82nd annual meeting attendees listen to District 7 director Aaron Chervestad while he gives the invocation.

Recipe Corner



Submit your recipes to be published in *Volts & Jolts*. Email to info@redlakeelectric.com or mail to: Red Lake Electric Cooperative, PO Box 430, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750.

Easy One Dish Turkey Casserole

Use up that leftover turkey if you have some.

2 cups cooked diced turkey or chicken

1 can low-fat cream of chicken soup

½ cup milk

½ Tbsp. dried onion flakes

*2 Tbsp. fresh chopped parsley or
1 tsp. dried*

Salt and pepper to taste

¾ cup frozen peas

*Bread dressing leftovers, or make a
box of Stove Top*

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Mix all ingredients except bread dressing in an 8x8 pan, stirring until combined. Spread bread dressing over top. Cover loosely with aluminum foil.

Bake for 20-30 minutes or until heated through and bubbly. Take off foil and let the top brown a bit. Serve warm and enjoy!

Congratulations, winners!

Members who use Auto Pay for making their monthly energy payments and members who have signed up for paperless billing through SmartHub were entered into promotional drawings.

Winners for the Auto Pay drawings were: Tammy A. Lafreniere (Kindle Fire) and Daniel Niebuhr (\$100 credit).

Paperless winners were: Meryl L. Lindemoen (\$100 credit) and Katie Dolan (Kindle Fire).

Stable warmth in unstable times

Cooperative energy planners predict an average winter season of demand response

Uncertainty has been the name of the game for much of 2020. But as we slip into the last few weeks of the year, Red Lake Electric Cooperative feels certain about one thing – your continued warmth and comfort throughout the winter.

The energy planners at Minnkota Power Cooperative (power provider for Red Lake Electric) expect a standard season for members with electric heat on demand response. The voluntary program allows the cooperative to temporarily interrupt service to a member's off-peak loads, like electric heating and large-capacity water heaters, in exchange for a lower electric rate. For technologies like air-source heat pumps and plenum heaters, the system automatically switches to a backup fuel source such as propane, so there is no break in comfort.

Todd Sailer, Minnkota senior manager of power supply and resource planning, says he expects the level of winter demand response to be comparable to the past 4-5 years – less than 100 hours. Members should always be prepared for up to 200-250 hours of management, but have historically encountered much less. Last

winter, Minnkota only logged 10 hours of interruption due mild weather and low wholesale energy prices.

“The only things that are really going to drive that up are a shift in the energy market, which is typically going to be weather related,” Sailer explained. “If you get a polar vortex or a wind event where there's simply no wind during high loads, that's where that number suddenly goes from 70 to 250 hours really quick.”

Demand response doesn't just happen during extreme cold. A planned generator outage or extended lack of intermittent resources across the region can push the program into action. “When we see there's no wind in North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa and those areas where there's often a lot of wind, that's when we start to see high markets, and that's when you'll see more demand response,” Sailer said.

Although Minnkota expects a typical level of demand response this year, COVID-19 may change when it activates. When more people are working and learning from home, times of peak energy usage shift, which impacts the availability of excess resources to

cover energy demand.

“Instead of demand response from 7-9 a.m., it might be from 8-11 a.m.,” Sailer said. “The load curve changes, so it might change how we actually implement our load management.”

Red Lake Electric will run a demand response test sometime in early December. During that time, make sure your system is working properly and that you have adequate backup fuel before the coldest days arrive. If you are not a participant in the program but are interested in how to save money with an all-season air-source heat pump, a cost-effective plenum heater or zero-maintenance under-floor storage heat, call your energy experts at Red Lake Electric.

The demand response program began as a way to manage power during peak seasonal need without building additional generation resources – a costly solution for only a few days a year. But the electric heating technologies that have (21562 Helen Holen) evolved within the program are helping our members enhance their comfort and safety, things we could all use a little more of in 2020.

California blackouts show need for all-of-the-above energy strategy



Amid a global pandemic, millions of Californians were plunged into darkness this summer as heat-waves battered the state's electric grid.

Rolling blackouts were required as record-setting temperatures pushed the demand for electricity well above the available generation resources at times during Aug. 14-15. California's Independent System Operator (CAISO), the entity that manages the state's grid, ordered utilities to impose temporary blackouts for the first time in nearly two decades, pulling the plug on air conditioners, refrigerators, TVs and other electric appliances when consumers needed them most. In addition to the outages, CAISO spent significant stretches of the summer pleading with consumers to reduce their electricity usage as it dealt with system instability.

There are several causes of this crisis, but a primary issue is the overreliance on intermittent resources, such as wind and solar, while undervaluing generation resources that can operate 24/7. CAISO experienced this issue firsthand on Aug. 14, as the wind stopped blowing that evening and (29766 Jacob Riendeau) nearly 1,000 megawatts (MW) of wind generation vanished from the grid without warning. No additional dispatchable generation, such as coal, natural gas or nuclear, was available to meet the demand, leaving communities in the dark.

In October, CAISO completed a preliminary root-cause analysis of the summer blackouts. The analysis found that "resource planning targets have not kept pace to lead to sufficient resources that can be relied upon to meet demand in the early evening hours (as the sun goes down and solar farms no longer operate). This makes

balancing demand and supply more challenging. These challenges were amplified by the extreme heat storm."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom said, "Collectively, energy regulators failed to anticipate this event and to take necessary actions to ensure reliable power to Californians. This cannot stand. California residents and businesses deserve better from their government."

Following the events in California, some have wondered if a similar situation could happen in Minnesota. The answer is yes. To date, utilities have been able to collaborate through the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), which manages the electric grid in the Upper Midwest, to remove the risk of rolling blackouts. There have, however, been several emergency situations in recent years that have presented significant challenges for utilities, including the polar vortex event in January 2019. With limited production from wind and solar facilities due to extreme cold conditions, the electric grid remained reliable thanks in large part to the operation of dispatchable resources. Future plans to retire dispatchable resources and replace them with intermittent resources has the potential to create and accelerate grid reliability challenges in the Upper Midwest.

Renewable energy remains an important part of the future of the energy grid, but it is not positioned to stand alone as the only resource, especially in the near future. The California blackouts should serve as a reminder that an all-of-the-above energy strategy must be embraced to ensure the region has a reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible supply of electricity – now and in the future.



FEDERAL/STATE ENERGY ASSISTANCE

If you need help paying your electric utility bill, you may qualify for state or federal fuel assistance. For complete qualification and application information, contact your local county welfare or community/citizen's action council listed below. These organizations may also provide budget counseling.

Inter-County Community Council
Oklee, MN
Serves East Polk, Pennington and Red Lake Counties
218-796-5144
Toll-free: 1-888-778-4008
Fax: 218-796-5175

Northwest Community Action
Badger, MN
Serves East Marshall County
218-528-3258
Toll-free: 1-800-568-5329
Fax: 218-528-3259

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council
Crookston, MN
Serves West Polk and West Marshall Counties
218-281-9080
Toll-free: 1-866-264-3729
Fax: 218-281-0705

Red Lake Community Action Agency
Red Lake, MN
Serves Beltrami County
218-679-1880

NOTICE OF NAMES

Hidden within the text of the articles of this issue of the *Volts & Jolts* are the names and account numbers of some Red Lake Electric Cooperative members. They will appear within the articles in parentheses as such (9999999.99 Willie Ray Member). If you find your name and account number, clip it out and send it with your next payment. You will be credited with \$5 on your electric bill.

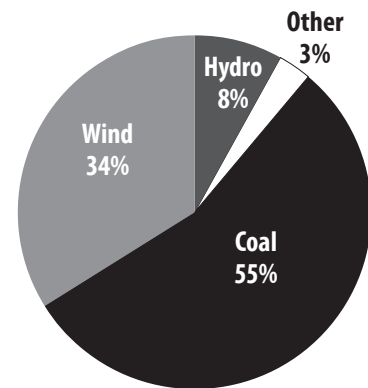


Like us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/redlakeelectric

Where Your Power Comes From

Coal and wind provide the majority of Minnkota's energy capacity resources. About 55% of Minnkota's energy capacity comes from coal, while about 34% comes from wind. The Langdon and Ashtabula Wind Energy Centers are located in eastern North Dakota. When you include hydro, about 42% of Minnkota's generation capacity comes from renewables. The hydro allocation comes from the Garrison Dam in western North Dakota.

	(kilowatts)
Milton R. Young Station – Coal	
Young 1	250,000
Young 2 (78%)	355,000
Coyote Station – Coal (30%)	128,100
Wind	
Infinity	1,800
Langdon Wind Energy Center	139,500
Ashtabula Wind Energy Center	217,500
Oliver III Wind Energy Center	100,000
Garrison Dam – Hydro	108,871
Other	35,000
Total power supply resources	1,335,771



Minnkota Power COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Take control of your account with SmartHub!



Now you can see your daily and monthly usage, pay/view your bill online and access a whole host of other useful services with SmartHub. SmartHub is a free and secure online energy portal at www.redlakeelectric.com that allows members to do the following things:

- View daily and monthly energy use.
- View and pay your bills online.
- Go paperless and receive an email notice when your bill is ready to view.
- Compare energy use to changes in temperature.



Scan the QR code
for online access to
SmartHub

If you have questions regarding SmartHub, call us at 218-253-2168 or send an email to info@redlakeelectric.com.

Keep your contact information up to date

Has your address changed? Do you have a new cell phone number? Did you drop your landline? Then it is time to contact your electric cooperative to verify and/or update the information we have on your account. By keeping your contact information up to date, you can ensure your cooperative is able to reach you regarding billing and account information, outage notifications, capital credits and more.

You can verify and update your information (20188 Bryan Larson) by logging into SmartHub. You may also email info@redlakeelectric.com or call the office at 218-253-2168 or 800-245-6068 to verify and update your contact information.

Cards of Thanks

Red Lake Electric reserves the right to edit thank you notes when being published.



RLEC Trust:

Thanks so much for the generous donation to the Crookston Youth Foundation. We used the money to buy supplies for the students at the youth center. Many thanks!

*Tom Amiot,
Founder & Chairman*

Thank you for the grant money. We will put it towards our sidewalk project. It is greatly appreciated and we are working (26381 Terry Tollefson) to get the project completed next summer. Thank you again!

*Barb N., Sec/Treas.
TRF Kiwanis Club*

Thank you for awarding the Goodridge Senior Citizen Center a grant to help purchase a new backup furnace. Thank you to the individuals who serve on the Operation Round Up Board. A special thank you to the Red Lake Electric members for participating in the Operation Round Up program.

*Gordon Henrickson
Vice President, Goodridge Senior
Citizen Organization*

Thank you for the grant money for Pennington County Humane Society. Your support is greatly appreciated. Thanks to your generosity, along with

the 4,400 RLEC members who round up their electric bill, we will meet our mission to help many of the homeless/unwanted pets and provide emergency medical care in northwestern Minnesota.

*Pam Stengrim
Operations Manager*

On behalf of the Plummer Fire Department, I would like to thank you for awarding us an Operation Round Up grant. This grant will be used to purchase warning lights, fire support equipment and a two-way radio to outfit our recently purchased UTV for wildland fire and rescue operations. The Plummer Fire Department is thankful for the generosity of Red Lake Electric's members that make the Operation Round Up grants possible.

Wade Westlake, Fire Chief

We can't thank you enough for demonstrating (31185 Tracy Carlson) your financial support for the violence intervention program! There are many challenges in providing domestic and sexual violence services to the victims in our five counties of northwestern Minnesota. We continue to meet those challenges head on with the support of individuals and groups such as yours.

Staci Reay, Executive Director

ELECTRIC HEAT EXEMPTION

This is to certify that the primary source of heat for my residence is electricity and I am eligible for the electric heating sales tax exemption as provided by Minnesota State Law. The primary source is the source that supplies more heat than any other source for the largest period of time during the heating season.

Date _____ Account Number _____

Social Security Number _____

Signature _____

The PERFECT POWER PICK for your retirement

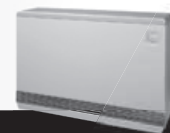


You're retirees seeking the worry-free life – choose electric thermal storage heat.

Retirement means a new life of family, fun and relaxation. Kick back and enjoy the no-fuss comfort, reliability and savings of electric thermal storage heat.

ELECTRIC THERMAL STORAGE HEAT

- Efficiently stores warmth in bricks for when you need it
- Provides consistent and uniform heat
- Eliminates need for backup heat source
- Clean and maintenance-free
- Qualifies for super-low off-peak electricity rate



**Up to \$60/kW
in rebates!**

Contact the energy experts at Red Lake Electric to find the perfect power pick for your space.

218-253-2168 or 1-800-245-6068

www.redlakeelectric.com

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are (24574 Laura L. Nelson) designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.

Source: www.nrel.gov



Electrical contractor continuing education classes to be held **online-only** in January

**** ONLINE ONLY ****

2021

**ELECTRICAL CONTINUING
EDUCATION CLASSES**

\$50

Minnkota Power Cooperative and Red Lake Electric Cooperative will again provide an opportunity for area electricians to obtain credits for license renewal by attending one of seven continuing education classes.

As a precaution against the spread of COVID-19, the classes will be offered online-only this year. Attendees will be required to have a computer or tablet with a strong internet (28004 Trenten Boucher) connection and a web camera that must stay on during the course.

The registration fee is \$50 for eight code credits. Taking the class on multiple days will not qualify for 16 code credits. Registration can be done online at www.minnkota.com. Registration must be completed at least seven days prior to the seminar.

Eight-hour classes will be offered on Jan. 5, Jan. 6, Jan. 12, Jan. 13, Jan. 19, Jan. 20 and Jan. 26. Virtual registration will start at 7:15 a.m., and each course will begin at 8 a.m.

This marks the 33rd year of the successful program, which is aimed at providing area trade allies with the latest information on electrical code and practices. For more information about the program, call (701) 795-4292 or email questions to contractortraining@minnkota.com.

Class Dates

Tuesday, Jan. 5
Wednesday, Jan. 6
Tuesday, Jan. 12
Wednesday, Jan. 13
Tuesday, Jan. 19
Wednesday, Jan. 20
Tuesday, Jan. 26

Technology Requirements

- Computer or tablet with strong internet connection
- Download of GoTo Meeting software (free)
- Web camera is on at all times

Registration

- Online registration and payment at **Minnkota.com**
- Link to the course and materials will be provided via email following registration

Class Schedule

7:15 - 8 a.m. – Virtual sign-in
8 a.m. - noon – Workshop

Noon - 1 p.m. – Lunch break
1 - 5 p.m. – Workshop