

# ***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*

**RL EC**  
**RL EC**

NOVEMBER 2021

## **HAPPY** *Thanksgiving*

From all of us at **RED LAKE  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

Red Lake Electric Cooperative  
will be closed Thursday,  
Nov. 25, for Thanksgiving

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

## **Congratulations, winners!**

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

**Winners from the Auto Pay drawings were:** Ronald Moritz of Thief River Falls and Anthony Moen of Goodridge, each winning a \$100 energy credit.

**Winners from the Paperless drawings were:** Gary F. Barrett of Newfolden and Nate D. Larson of Thief River Falls, each winning a \$100 energy credit.



#### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President ..... Stacy Blawat  
Vice President..... Peter Mosbeck  
Secretary-Treasurer ..... Mark Hanson  
Directors ..... Cecil Anderson,  
Aaron Chervestad, Bonnie Christians,  
Colette Kujava, Steve Linder, Randy Versdahl  
*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](http://www.redlakeelectric.com)  
Email: [info@redlakeelectric.com](mailto: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**

Red Lake and Polk 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](http://www.dli.mn.gov) for more information. The inspectors can be reached weekday 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.*



## Electricity prices remain stable as other energy costs rise

by Stephanie Johnson

In Minnesota, the cost of energy matters. We use significantly more energy per capita than the average U.S. citizen with our cold winters and long-distance travel. The cost of heating and transportation fuels are on the rise, but Red Lake Electric Cooperative forecasts stable pricing for electricity this winter season.

Member-consumers who participate in the off-peak electric heating program have seen rates remain flat in recent years, while fossil fuel prices fluctuate up and down consistently. In exchange for the discounted off-peak electric rate (about half the retail rate), consumers voluntarily allow electric heating systems and other interruptible loads to be temporarily turned off or switched to a backup fuel source (like propane) during periods of high demand for electricity across the region. By utilizing the off-peak program, Minnkota Power Cooperative, Red Lake Electric Cooperative's wholesale power provider, avoids purchasing high-priced energy from other utilities or the energy market during peak demand periods.

The off-peak program proved extraordinarily valuable during the electric grid challenges experienced in February 2021, when widespread power outages and high market prices impacted Texas and other areas of the country. Minnkota and Red Lake Electric Cooperative were able to strategically use the program to shield you from price volatility and other system issues.

As you plan for this winter season, (30110 Robert Laznicka) we want to make sure our members know what to expect and are prepared for how increasing fuel costs have the potential to impact your home heating strategy.

### What can you expect this winter?

- **Higher propane, fuel oil and natural gas prices**  
Expect to see the cost of home heating fuels much higher this winter compared to previous years. Propane prices are near double the cost compared to this time last year and are forecasted to remain high throughout the winter. Fortunately, the cost of electricity will stay stable this winter. For members that have off-peak electric heat, this is excellent news!
- **Stable electricity prices**  
Natural gas price increases have contributed to wholesale electricity market prices being twice as high as they were

last year. Your cooperative and Minnkota are able to avoid these issues because our power supply consists of coal, wind and hydro, which are not susceptible to fuel price spikes. The off-peak/load control programs can also be used to avoid the costly wholesale electricity market.

- **Potential for more off-peak load control hours**  
With more wholesale electricity market volatility, members should expect the potential for more off-peak load control hours than in previous years. More than 200 hours of load control is possible during the winter season depending on wholesale power market prices and weather conditions.

### What can you do to prepare?

- **Switch to off-peak electric heating**  
If you have a dual-fuel furnace, it is time to switch to off-peak electricity and use propane or fuel oil as a backup. This strategy will limit your usage of higher-priced heating fuels. Contact our energy experts today to find out more about how off-peak heating works and the incentives available for the installation of new off-peak electric heating equipment.
- **Fill your propane or fuel oil tank**  
Be sure to fill your propane or fuel oil tank as soon as possible, and make sure your tank is large enough to hold an adequate supply. If your propane tank gets low during extreme cold temperatures, it may not work properly. Remember, prices typically rise as demand increases during the heating season.
- **Check your furnace**  
Make sure to change your furnace filter regularly. Contact a heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) professional to inspect/maintain your system as needed. Early attention to maintenance can help prevent failures in the heart of heating season.

Members will undoubtedly have to spend more on energy to heat their homes and for transportation this year, but the good news (28500 Dan Kees) is that the price you pay for electricity is forecasted to remain flat. If you have questions about how to save on your winter heating bills or are having issues making payments, please contact our offices. We are here to help and can connect you with the right resources, no matter the situation.



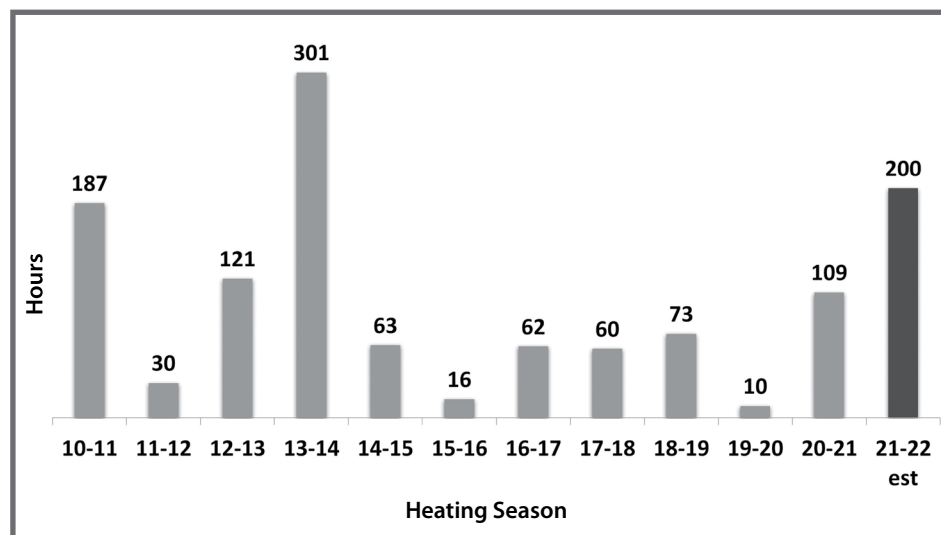
## Member Service Department

by Kelli Brateng

### Electric heat control option determines off-peak rate

There are three control options available for controlling off-peak electric heat. The option chosen determines the rate per kilowatt hour (kWh).

The first option is referred to as long-term control, which results in the best heating rate, currently 5.6¢ per kWh. Heating equipment controlled under this option is controlled on an as-needed basis and could be controlled continuously for 24 hours or more. This option requires an automatic, dependable, alternate heat source capable of heating the entire home or building. An option that applies to limited electric heating installations is medium-term control, or daily cycling. This also results in a rate of 5.6¢ per kWh. This control option is for underfloor heating cable and panels and electric boilers supplying floor heat when there is a sand bed for a heat sink. These heating installations are controlled every day during the heating season with two on-times and two off-times amounting to approximately 12 hours each. The daily cycling option requires the heat sink to maintain temperature in the building.



Short-term control is the other option which yields a current rate of 7.9¢ per kWh. Controlled heating equipment under this option can be controlled for four hours at one time and it can happen twice within 24 hours. Short-term control is also on an as-needed basis and generally occurs in the early daylight hours (20831 Paul Tanberg) and early evening hours. Members with nonautomatic or wood backup heating systems choose this control option.

Check out the graph below – you will find the long control hours over the past 11 heating seasons. The estimated hours of long-term control for the 2021-2022 heating season are 200 hours.

If you are currently enrolled (24753 Wallace Hoselton) in the short-term control option and would like to change to the long-term control option and take advantage of a better rate, give us a call. Remember, long-term control requires a reliable, automatic, backup heat source.

Wishing you abundant blessings, peace and happiness. Happy Thanksgiving!



Submit your recipes to be published in *Volts & Jolts*. Email to [info@redlakeelectric.com](mailto:info@redlakeelectric.com) or mail to: Red Lake Electric Cooperative, PO Box 430, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750-0430.

### Boston Cream Poke Cake

#### For the cake:

- 1 box yellow butter cake mix plus ingredients called for on package (vegetable oil, eggs, water)
- 2 boxes instant vanilla pudding (3.4-ounce boxes – see directions for not using entire second box)
- 4 cups whole milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

#### For the ganache:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup milk chocolate chips
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

#### Instructions:

1. Make the yellow butter cake mix per package directions. Pour into a lightly greased 9×13 baking dish. Place in the oven and bake at the recommended temperature and time per the cake box directions.
2. Remove cake from the oven and let cool. Once cooled, use the back of a wooden spoon to poke holes all over the top of the cake, about an inch and a half apart. Set aside.
3. In a medium mixing bowl combine instant vanilla pudding, whole milk, and vanilla extract. Use a whisk to combine.
4. Before pouring, take out ½ cup of the mixture and set aside, then immediately pour the pudding mixture over the top of the cake before it has a chance to set up.
5. Place the cake in the refrigerator for 1 hour.
6. In a medium mixing bowl combine butter, semi-sweet chocolate chips, milk chocolate chips, heavy cream, and vanilla extract. Stir together. Place in the microwave for 30 seconds. Remove and stir together. Repeat steps in 30-second increments until the chocolate is melted and the mixture is combined.
7. Pour the chocolate over the top of the cake and place it in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours or overnight if you have the time





# Give thanks for the off-peak program

This time of year, we often reflect on what we are thankful for and express gratitude for the good things in our lives. Red Lake Electric Cooperative is grateful for member-consumers who participate in the off-peak program. In true cooperative fashion, the program helps us all work together to use energy wisely, improve reliability of electric service and save money.

The off-peak program is voluntary for consumers who agree to let Minnkota Power Cooperative, our wholesale power provider, temporarily interrupt power to certain electric loads – like heating systems, water heaters or vehicle chargers – when demand for electricity is high.

The off-peak program has been a success story since its implementation in 1977 because it provides a true win-win-win for you, your cooperative and the electric grid. Learn more below about how we all have something for which to be thankful with the off-peak program.

**Member-consumers** – Member-consumers like you receive a discounted electric rate (about half the retail rate) for participating in the off-peak electric heating, water heating or vehicle charging programs. In exchange for these savings, consumers (25759 Kelan Bruggeman) voluntarily allow these electric systems and other interruptible loads to be temporarily turned off or switched to a backup fuel source primarily during periods of high demand for electricity. In addition to the lower electric rate, your cooperative offers numerous rebate and incentive programs to help offset the cost of purchasing new equipment.

**Your cooperative** – The cost of electricity is not only based on how much is used, but also when it is used. Your cooperative saves on its wholesale power costs through the off-peak program by reducing its demand for electricity during peak events. These savings are passed back to you through the lower off-peak rate.

**Minnkota and the grid** – By utilizing the off-peak program, Minnkota can more effectively manage its existing power resources and avoid purchasing high-priced energy from other utilities or the energy market. It also prevents the need to acquire or build new electric generating resources that would carry a very high cost.

The off-peak program proved extraordinarily valuable during the electric grid challenges experienced in February 2021, when widespread power outages and high market prices impacted other areas of the country. Minnkota and your electric cooperative were able to strategically use the program to shield you from price volatility and other system issues.

Contact Red Lake Electric's energy experts at 218-253-2168 or visit [redlakeelectric.com](http://redlakeelectric.com) to learn about the great rebate programs available to help you join the off-peak program.



## Scared of propane prices?

### Protect yourself with a plenum.

The costs of fuels used to heat our homes in the winter are rising, and they're rising fast. Propane prices entered this year's cold season nearly 100% higher than they were at the same time last year. In a state as frigid as ours, heating with only propane can quickly take a chunk out of your holiday shopping budget – and beyond.

Protect yourself from the volatile price of propane by utilizing a dual-fuel electric plenum heater on our popular off-peak program. The cost of off-peak electricity has remained low and stable for more than a decade, unlike the seasonal swings of propane. If you already have a plenum, make sure it's turned on and working smoothly to take advantage of enormous savings.

A plenum pairs easily with your existing oil or propane forced-air system. It uses the furnace fan you already have (31065 Andrew S Giannonatti) to move air across heater elements to heat your home, as well as the same thermostat and duct-work. Most of the fall and winter season, the plenum will deliver

reduced-cost off-peak electric heat to keep your space cozy and comfortable. When your cooperative finds it necessary to lower the electric demand on its system (usually 100-200 hours per year, often during extreme cold), it will remotely switch your heat to a backup fuel, like propane. You notice no difference in comfort – but you'll notice a big difference on your energy costs!

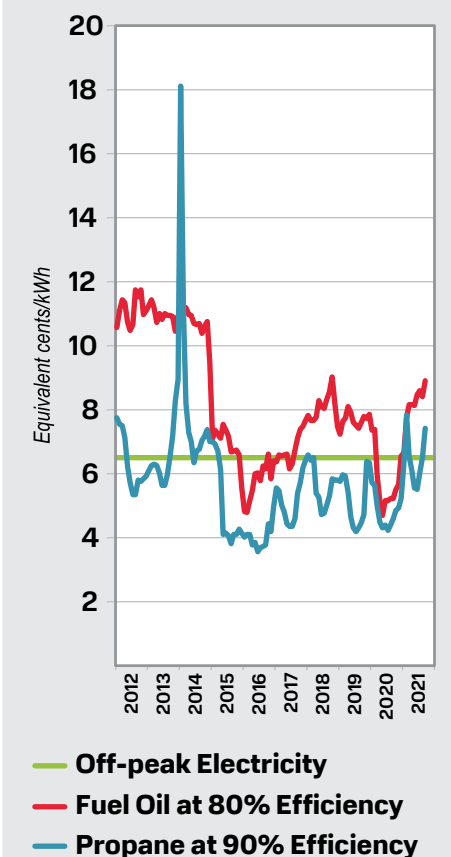
Plenums are a safe and clean way to warm your home, and they allow you to receive the off-peak heating rate – about 50% of the standard rate – as well as a large rebate on installation. Plus, installing a plenum heater will have you relying less on your gas furnace, which can help increase the furnace's lifespan. In many cases, a plenum can be installed in conjunction with an air-source heat pump, which brings additional benefits.

Propane prices are projected to remain high throughout the winter, so call Red Lake Electric Cooperative today to find out how you can get started with a plenum heater.



*This 10-year snapshot shows how volatile propane and fuel oil prices can be over time, as off-peak electricity rates stay low and steady. Around 2013, propane followed an upward trend that peaked nearly three times higher than off-peak electricity, and it is currently on the rise again.*

**Average Home Heating Prices**  
(Last 10 years)



# What's the *buzz* about **ELECTRIC CHAINSAWS**

## 5 things to know about cordless battery chainsaws

Most people associate operating a chainsaw with a series of headaches. The messy mixing of oil and gas, the endless pulling of the starter cord and the ear-piercing roar of the 110-decibel motor are enough to frustrate even the lumberjacks among us.

But with major advancements in battery-powered technology, electric chainsaws are quietly proving to be just as mighty as many of their gas-powered counterparts in everything from simple pruning to chopping up fallen trees. And their benefits will help cut the stress out of your fall cleanup activities.

1

### **SIMPLE START**

Traditional pull-start engines can be a pain. With an electric chainsaw, you simply keep the battery on the charger and pop it into the chainsaw when you're ready. In one push of a button, you're ready to saw.

2

### **LESS MAINTENANCE**

By switching from a two-stroke gas engine to an electric motor, you avoid the need to mix fuels and maintain carburetors, fuel lines, spark plugs, air filters and other parts. With no need to refuel and fewer repairs, you can expect to save money on overall operations.

3

### **SAFE AND EASY TO OPERATE**

Electric chainsaws are lightweight and easy to handle. They turn on easily, so there's no need to leave a saw idling so you don't have to start it again. And when they're on, they vibrate less, which makes them less demanding to operate and allows you to be more precise with each cut.

4

### **NO NOISE OR ODOR**

Each slice is much quieter with an electric chainsaw. And with no gas needs, there are no harsh fuel odors or emissions.

5

### **ONE BATTERY DOES IT ALL**

Several electric chainsaw brands have batteries that can be used in multiple tools. This means you can slide the battery out of your chainsaw and use it in a lawnmower, trimmer, leaf blower and more.

## Keep your contact information up to date

Has your address changed? Do you have a new cellphone 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 (20639 David C Larson) is able to reach you regarding billing and account information, outage notifications, capital credits and more.

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

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Fall is the perfect time to prep your home for the upcoming winter chill. One of the best ways you can save energy and stay comfortable is to caulk and weatherstrip areas that typically need sealing.

Start by sealing around windows and doors. Seal plumbing, ducting and areas where electrical wiring comes through walls, floors and ceilings for additional energy savings.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## The Power of SmartHub



See your daily and monthly usage, pay/view your bill online, plus a whole host of other useful services with SmartHub. SmartHub is a free and secure online energy portal.

Go to [redlakeelectric.com](http://redlakeelectric.com) and experience the power of SmartHub today!



## NOTICE OF NAMES

Hidden within the text of the articles of this issue of *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 (999999.99 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.

## **+ ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR**

# **CONTINUING EDUCATION SESSIONS**

### **SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY, FEBRUARY**



Minnkota Power Cooperative, Red Lake Electric Cooperative and its partners will again provide an opportunity (24234 Dennis McGeary) for area electricians to obtain credits for license renewal by attending one of the six continuing education classes being offered throughout eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota.

Tim Pull will instruct the classes, which are scheduled to be held in-person throughout the region. Attendees will be alerted by email if changing COVID-19 requirements impact course dates, times or venues.

This marks the 34<sup>th</sup> year of the successful program, which is aimed at providing area trade allies with the latest information on electrical code and practices. The classes will be held at the following locations:

#### **Tuesday, January 4**

Fargo Holiday Inn  
3803 13th Ave South  
Fargo, ND



#### **Wednesday, January 5**

Fargo Holiday Inn  
3803 13th Ave South  
Fargo, ND



#### **Tuesday, January 11**

Fergus Falls Eagles Club  
120 S Peck Street  
Fergus Falls, MN

#### **Tuesday, January 18**

Bemidji Eagles Club  
1270 Neilson Ave SE  
Bemidji, MN



#### **Tuesday, February 1**

Minnkota Power Cooperative  
5301 32nd Ave South  
Grand Forks, ND



#### **Wednesday, February 2**

Minnkota Power Cooperative  
5301 32nd Ave South  
Grand Forks, ND

The registration fee is **\$75 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](http://www.minnkota.com). Registration must be completed at least seven days prior to the seminar. For residential building contractor continuing education workshops, contact your local Home Builders Association.

For more information about the program, call (701) 795-4292 or e-mail questions to [contractortraining@minnkota.com](mailto:contractortraining@minnkota.com).

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**



**7:15 - 8 a.m.**  
Sign-in



**8 a.m. - noon**  
Workshop



**Noon - 1 p.m.**  
Lunch provided



**1 - 5 p.m.**  
Workshop

**\$75 REGISTRATION FEE**