

# ***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



## **84<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

*See page 4 for details*





#### 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 in-  
spection 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.*



## The Power Behind Your Power Lineworker Appreciation Day was April 11

by Stephanie Johnson

You've likely noticed Red Lake Elec-  
tric's crews out and about, working  
on power lines and other electrical  
equipment in our community. It's no  
secret that a lineworker's job is tough –  
but it's a job that's essential and must be  
done, often in challenging conditions.  
This month, as we celebrated Lineworker  
Appreciation Day on April 11, I thought  
I'd share some interesting facts about  
electric lineworkers with you.

The work can be heavy, in more ways  
than one. Did you know the equipment  
and tools that a lineworker carries while  
climbing a utility pole can weigh up to  
50 pounds? That's the same as carrying  
six gallons of water. Speaking of utility  
poles, lineworkers are required (29019  
Garret Panek) to climb poles ranging  
anywhere from 30 to 120 feet tall. Need-  
less to say, if you have a fear of heights,  
this likely isn't the career path for you.

Lineworkers must be committed to  
their career – because it's not just a job,  
it's a lifestyle. The long hours and ever-  
present danger can truly take a toll. In  
fact, being a lineworker is listed in the  
top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

Lineworkers often work nontradi-  
tional hours, outdoors in difficult condi-  
tions. While the job does not require a  
college degree, it does require technical  
skills, years of training and hands-on  
learning. Did you know that to become  
a journeyman lineworker can take more  
than 7,000 hours of training (or about  
four years)? That's because working with  
high-voltage equipment requires special-  
ized skills, experience and an ongoing  
mental toughness. Shortcuts are not an  
option, and there is no room for error in  
this line of work.

Despite the many challenges, Red  
Lake Electric's lineworkers are commit-  
ted to powering our local community.  
During severe weather events that bring  
major power outages, lineworkers are  
among the first ones called. They must  
be ready to leave the comfort of their  
home and families unexpectedly, and  
they don't return until the job is done.  
That's why the lineworker's family is  
also dedicated to service. They under-  
stand the importance of the job to the  
community.

Nationwide, there are approximately  
120,000 electric lineworkers. Here in  
Red Lake Falls, Red Lake Electric has  
nine lineworkers that are responsible for  
keeping power flowing 24/7, 365 days  
a year. To do this, they maintain 2,642  
miles of power lines across six counties.  
In addition to the highly visible tasks  
lineworkers perform, their job today  
goes far beyond climbing utility poles  
to repair a wire. Today's lineworkers are  
information experts who can pinpoint  
power outages from miles away. Line  
crews now use laptops, tablets, and other  
technologies to map outages, survey  
damage and troubleshoot problems.

Being a lineworker may not seem  
like a glamorous job, but it is absolutely  
essential to the life of our community.  
Without the exceptional dedication and  
commitment of these hardworking men,  
we simply (29703 Jamie P. Miramontes)  
would not have the reliable electricity  
that we need for everyday life.

So, the next time you see a linework-  
er, please thank them for the work they  
do to keep power flowing, regardless of  
the time of day or weather conditions.  
After all, lineworkers are the power  
behind your power.



**\$1**

**Learned Norwegian  
for your heritage trip?**

It's a powerful experience, powered  
by just \$1 of tablet energy.

**VALUE OF  
ELECTRICITY**

# April is National Safe Digging Month

If you are planning an outdoor project,  
don't forget to **CALL BEFORE YOU DIG.**

That's right. Digging safety is so vitally  
important that there is an entire month dedicated to  
it. Your yard may be hiding underground utility pipes, cables  
and wires, so if you're planning a spring project that involves a shovel or excavator, it's critical  
to call 8-1-1 before you start. A quick call can (23294 Joanie Bakke) keep your project on  
schedule, your family safe and your neighbors connected to the utilities they need.

## Calling is critical

Installing a  
mailbox?  
**CALL 8-1-1.**



Planting a  
garden?  
**CALL 8-1-1.**



Building a  
deck?  
**CALL 8-1-1.**



## The process is easy

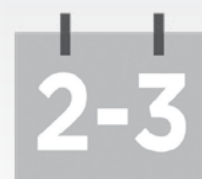
### 1 NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or submit a  
request online two to three  
days before you begin. The  
utilities affected by your  
digging will be notified of  
your project.



### 2 WAIT

It may take two  
to three days for  
utilities to send a  
locator to mark any  
underground lines.



### 3 CONFIRM

Compare the marks on  
your yard to the list of  
utilities contacted by  
8-1-1. Confirm that all  
entities have responded  
to the request.



### 4 RESPECT

Protect and follow  
the utility markers –  
the flags and/or paint  
will remain important  
guides throughout  
your project.



### 5 DIG CAREFULLY

Be sure to avoid  
digging within two  
feet of the markers on  
all sides. If you can't,  
you'll need to consider  
moving your project.



Scan the code with your phone to submit  
a request online, or visit [call811.com](http://call811.com).



# 84<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

The 84th annual meeting of Red Lake Electric Cooperative was held March 30 at the Legacy Event Center in Thief River Falls. The meeting was attended by approximately 265 cooperative members (25997 Russell Remick) and guests.

President Stacy Blawat called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. The meeting was opened with the singing of the national anthem by Grace Harmoning of Red Lake Falls, followed by the invocation by Mark Hanson and introduction of the board of directors and special guests by board president Stacy Blawat.

The meeting agenda included the following: approval of 2021 annual meeting minutes by secretary/treasurer Mark Hanson; the president's report and election of directors by Stacy Blawat; the general manager's and financial report by Stephanie Johnson.

Robert "Mac" McLennan, president & CEO for Minnkota Power Cooperative in Grand Forks, N.D., presented to the meeting attendees updates regarding carbon capture and Minnkota's Project Tundra.

Annually, employees and directors are recognized when surpassing five-year increments of service. The following were recognized at the meeting: Steve Conely, Manager of Operations, 20 years; Stacy Blawat, District 2 Board Director, 10 years; Jordan Gervais, Journeyman Lineman, and Sam Pahlen, Journeyman Lineman, 10 years; Chris Knott, Engineering Technician, 5 years.

Julie Stennes presented a \$500 Operation Round Up® award to Middle River Veterans Outdoors, an organization founded on the sole purpose of providing no-cost outdoor recreation opportunities for any and all veterans. These opportunities include winter and summer fishing, hunting and other shooting sports. Their signature event is "The Middle River Disabled Veterans Goose Hunt," and they also organize youth hunting and shooting sports.

Door prizes were awarded and a sit-down meal was provided.

Congratulations to our reelected directors: Colette Kujava, Randy Versdahl and Peter Mosbeck were elected at the annual meeting and will each serve three-year terms.

## Directors Reelected to Red Lake Electric's Board



**Colette Kujava**  
District 3



**Randy Versdahl**  
District 6



**Peter Mosbeck**  
District 9



Members sign up for their chance to win a door prize.



Brita Endrud (left) and Kaylee Cusack from Minnkota Power Cooperative present Project Tundra to Red Lake Electric Cooperative members.



A crowd of more than 260 members gathered at the Legacy Event Center in Thief River Falls to hear reports about their cooperative.



Albert Merkens of Thief River Falls was the winner of the air fryer.



Julie Stennes presents a \$500 Operation Round Up® check to Middle River Veterans Outdoors. Receiving the check was Jason Cervantes (left) and Mike Brazier (right).



Gary Weiss (left) of Red Lake Falls was the winner of the DeWalt Leaf Blower and Jerry Schindler (right) of Red Lake Falls was the winner of a \$300 energy credit.

## Winners of Door Prizes:

- \$300 Energy Credit:** Jerry Schindler, Red Lake Falls
- \$150 Energy Credit:** Carol DeLap, Thief River Falls
- \$100 Energy Credit:** Darwin Eidelbes, Goodridge
- \$75 Energy Credit:** Karen Schirrick, Red Lake Falls
- \$75 Energy Credit:** Dale Cole, Middle River
- \$75 Energy Credit:** Richard Miller, Goodridge
- DeWalt Leaf Blower:** Gary Weiss, Red Lake Falls
- Air Fryer:** Albert Merkens, Thief River Falls
- Lock 'N Go Portable Electric Grill:** Marcus Langevin, Thief River Falls



# YOUR CO-OP CELEBRATES ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY ON EARTH DAY

Environmental stewardship is a core value of Red Lake Electric Cooperative and our wholesale power provider Minnkota Power Cooperative. As local energy providers, we operate facilities that run 24 hours a day in the communities where we live, work, raise families and enjoy the great outdoors. Simply put, we have a personal stake in ensuring our air, land and water stay in pristine condition for future generations. On Earth Day, April 22, we're reflecting on the ways we've helped make the generation and delivery of electricity more responsible, while also helping you – our member – use energy more wisely.



## GENERATION

Red Lake Electric Cooperative utilizes a diverse mix of energy resources, including coal, wind and hydro power, to meet your 24/7 needs. About 42% of the generation capacity available is derived from carbon-free resources. Efforts are currently being explored to further reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at the coal-based Milton R. Young Station through Project Tundra. The project would install technologies capable of removing approximately 90% of the CO<sub>2</sub> from either generator at the facility. The facility already operates cleanly thanks to \$425 million in emissions control technologies, while strict reclamation standards require that all land mined must be restored to original condition or better.



## POWER DELIVERY

The routing of power lines takes into account environmentally sensitive areas and the migratory patterns of birds. Through its blink outage mitigation efforts, Minnkota has installed technologies on its power lines to help prevent birds from perching and other animals from climbing poles where they may encounter danger. Other technologies are installed when necessary to make lines more visible for birds. When viable, Red Lake Electric Cooperative lines are converted from overhead to underground in an effort to limit power outages and reduce environmental impacts.



## AT HOME

Red Lake Electric Cooperative has the energy experts available to help you save money and use electricity wisely. In addition to advice and energy-saving tips, you also have access to (29669 Cody Walseth) great rebates on highly efficient technologies. This includes at-home electric vehicle chargers and highly efficient heating and cooling systems, like air-source heat pumps. Members who wish to receive up to 100% of their electricity from renewable resources can also sign up for the Infinity Renewable Energy program. Check out our website for the latest incentives and offerings.



# Operation Round Up® grants total \$12,000

The Red Lake Electric Trust board met recently and awarded 16 grants to area nonprofit and community organizations that totaled \$12,000. Since its inception in 1993, 1,006 Operation Round Up® grants totaling \$624,000 have been gifted to area community organizations. The Red Lake Electric Trust receives (28077 Ben Erickson) money for grants from the Operation Round Up® program administered by the Red Lake Electric Cooperative. Today, 98% of Red Lake Electric's members voluntarily "round up" their monthly bill for the Operation Round Up® program.

### Following organizations were awarded Round Up funds to help the disadvantaged:

- TRF Area Food Shelf: \$500 to help support the food shelf building and day-to-day expenses.
- Violence Intervention Project – TRF: \$1,000 to help supplement its Parenting Time Center and Umbrella Tree programs.

### Six area emergency service providers were given grants:

- Red Lake Falls Volunteer Ambulance: \$1,000 to help purchase an office computer.
- Newfolden Volunteer Fire Department: \$1,000 to help replace turnout gear for all volunteers.
- Oklee Volunteer Ambulance Service: \$1,000 to help purchase an airway trainer and other medical equipment.
- Viking Fire and Rescue: \$1,000 to replace firefighter SCBA equipment.
- Oklee Fire Department: \$1,000 to help upgrade grass rig, Polaris Ranger and an H2O Caddie for patient transport.
- Goodridge Area Fire and Rescue: \$1,000 to help replace firefighting pickup and equipment for it.

### One grant given to a historical organization:

- Goodridge Area Historical Society: \$500 to help continued restoration of the Woodrow School House.

### Grant awarded to benefit the general public:

- NCH Trails to Treatments: \$1,000 to help those affected by cancer in our area with out-of-pocket expenses and supply grants.

### Following five grants were given focusing on senior care:

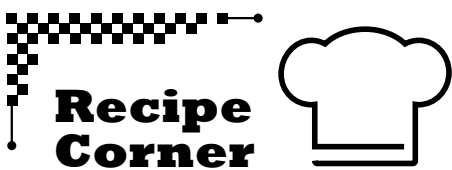
- Inter-County Nursing Service of TRF: \$500 to help with the cost of maintenance care home health for seniors.
- Middle River-Thief Lake Living at Home/Block Nurse Program: \$500 to help fund medical transportation expenses for area seniors.
- Goodridge Senior Citizens Center: \$500 to help construct new deck and railing to enter the senior citizens center.
- Middle River Senior Citizens: \$500 to help defray costs for outings, transportation for outside activities for seniors.
- Power of Produce Plus: \$500 to help seniors purchase locally grown fruit and vegetables from farmers markets.

### Following organization received funds focused on youth programs:

- Middle River Veterans Outdoors Inc. - \$500 to help fund event for youth waterfowl hunt.

The RLE Trust board of directors determines grants two times per year, in March and September. Serving on the board are Stacy Bierman - President, Middle River; Diane Kolstoe – Vice President, Thief River Falls; Julie Stennes – Secretary/Treasurer, Oklee; Ex-officio directors are Bonnie Christians of Crookston and Stephanie Johnson of Gatzke, representing Red Lake Electric Cooperative. Grant applications are available at the Red Lake Electric Cooperative office (31500 John P. Sullivan) or by visiting their website at [www.redlakeelectric.com](http://www.redlakeelectric.com). The next deadline for when the Operation Round Up® grant applications are due is Sept. 28, 2022.

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



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.

## Kentucky Butter Cake Cookies

### Ingredients

#### Cookies:

- 1 box white cake mix
- 2 eggs (whisked)
- 1/3 cup butter (melted)

#### Glaze:

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp water
- 1 tsp vanilla

### Instructions

#### Cookies:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine cookie ingredients in large bowl and mix until completely incorporated. *NOTE: Dough will be thick.*
3. Using a medium-sized cookie scoop (or heaping tablespoon), scoop cookies onto a parchment-lined cookie sheet.
4. Bake for 7-8 minutes, remove from oven and let cool on cookie sheet for 4-5 minutes before moving them to a cooling rack. Repeat until all of the dough is baked.

#### Glaze:

1. Combine the glaze ingredients in a small sauce pan. Cook over medium-low heat until the sugar is dissolved (it takes about 4 minutes), being sure to whisk the whole time. Spoon a teaspoon of glaze over each cookie and spread out, if necessary.
2. Let glaze set and then sprinkle with powdered sugar. Keep your Kentucky butter cake cookies in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days.

## 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 (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.

# ANATOMY OF A LINEWORKER

It takes brains, brawn and bravery to be a lineworker for a rural electric cooperative – and it also takes a whole lot of equipment. When it comes to building and maintaining our power lines, Red Lake Electric Cooperative always puts safety first. Our lineworkers sometimes carry more than 50 pounds of protective equipment (27945 Rick A. Cole) and gear as they climb a power pole, depending on what is needed for the job.

Even before they think about picking up additional tools, a lineworker will start with these basic accessories to keep them safe and efficient.

## HAND LINE

This is a lineworker's lifeline. Complete with steel clips and a pulley block, this rope, which hangs from a pole's cross arm, is strong enough for any job – from the routine hoisting of equipment to lifesaving missions.

## HARD HAT

A hard hat provides insulated protection against electrical hazards and shields the head from blows and falling objects.

## WOOD POLE FALL PROTECTION BELT

Before a lineworker starts climbing a pole, they loop a safety strap around the pole and rehook the strap to their equipment belt. This serves as an added safety precaution and allows the lineworker to work with both hands free.

## DITTY BAG

This canvas bag hangs from the equipment belt and holds the materials that lineworkers need at the ready for any number of jobs.

## BOOTS

These boots help prevent lineworkers from gaffing themselves in the leg. Serrated heels provide a better grip and steel shanks provide extra support on the pole.

## HAND LINE BLOCK

Lineworkers can't carry everything up on a pole, and the pulley block – the signature component of the hand line – is used to raise and lower heavy equipment.

## TOOL POUCH

This bag hangs from the back of the equipment belt and carries a wide variety of tools, such as pliers and wrenches.

## GAFFS

Razor-sharp steel points are strapped to boots for climbing poles. Only the tips dig into wood, helping lineworkers climb more safely and efficiently.

