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

RLEC
SEPTEMBER 2022

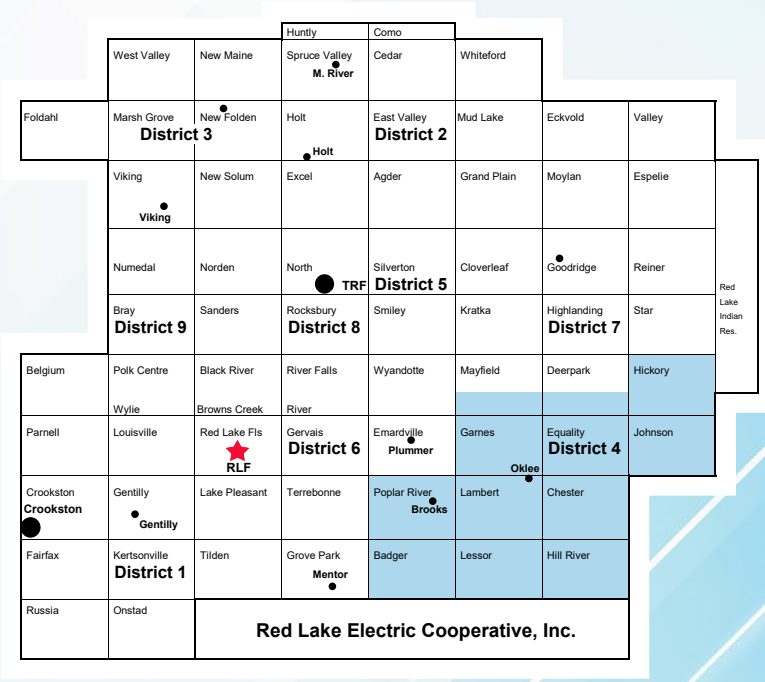
NEW DIRECTOR NEEDED IN DISTRICT 4

Steve Linder is not seeking reelection

Members in the Brooks, Oklee and Trail area will have a new director representing them on the Board of Directors at Red Lake Electric Cooperative. Steve Linder, the director serving this area, has been representing District 4 since 2002. Linder is completing the term he was reelected to in 2020 and is not seeking reelection in 2023.

Members of District 4 (Badger, Poplar River, Lessor, Lambert, Garnes, Hill River, Chester, Equality, Johnson and Hickory townships) will elect a director candidate at their district meeting to be held in early February.

The candidate receiving the most votes at their respective district meeting will be placed on the ballot for election at the cooperative's annual meeting on March 29.



Members can also be placed on the annual meeting ballot by petition. At least 15 members of the respective district must sign a nomination petition and return it by Feb. 27 to be placed on the annual meeting ballot. Nomination petition forms are available by calling or visiting the RLEC office in Red Lake Falls.

If you have additional questions on director responsibilities or meeting schedules, contact Linder in District 4 at 218-796-5331 or Stephanie Johnson, general manager, at 1-800-245-6068.

MEMBER APPRECIATION LUNCH!

Wednesday, October 12, 2022
Serving from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
In the warehouse (east doors)

Red Lake Electric Headquarters
412 International Drive SW, Red Lake Falls

Soup & sandwiches, dessert and beverages

RLEC Volts&Jolts

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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** 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.

Keep the lights on during the energy transition

BY JIM MATHESON AND MAC MCLENNAN

Dozens of states in the most powerful nation in the world may struggle to keep the lights on this summer.

It doesn't have to be this way. But absent a shift in policy and coordination between federal and state governments, this is the energy reality our nation will face for years to come.

Reliable electricity has been a staple in America for more than half a century. But that's no longer a certainty. Organizations across the nation have sounded the alarm: reliable electricity may be in jeopardy this summer. That's inexcusable.

Minnkota Power Cooperative utilizes a diverse mix of coal, wind and hydro resources to meet the 24/7 needs of electricity consumers in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota. While this power portfolio is strong, Minnkota does not operate on the electric grid alone. Utilities across the Upper Midwest and down to Louisiana are interconnected through the larger Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) grid. Challenges in other areas of this system can and do have impacts on Minnkota and its members.

MISO expects to face a high risk of reliability challenges during both "normal and extreme conditions." If demand for electricity exceeds the available supply, MISO could implement controlled power outages to avoid catastrophic damage to the power grid.

Some are quick to blame these newfound reliability threats on changing or more extreme weather patterns. That's part of the story, but there's a deeper problem that must be acknowledged.

Spurred by policy and market factors, the ongoing energy transition has prioritized premature baseload coal and nuclear plant closures without considering the collective impact on the power grid and the availability of feasible technology to fully replace them. That's proving to be a dangerous misstep.

In MISO alone, 3,200 megawatts of electric generating capacity have shut down in the past year. That's enough to keep the lights on in 2.8 million homes. And electricity demand is forecast to rise by nearly 2% this summer.

To put it simply, new power-generating projects in some of the largest electricity markets haven't caught up with plant closures—jeopardizing reliability in the process.

Policymakers should recalibrate their focus on a common-sense energy transition that doesn't risk reliability or punish low-income families and our economy. Those choices don't need to be at odds.

Driven by a focus on keeping the lights on, America's electric cooperatives have demonstrated what a responsible energy transition can look like. Electric co-ops substantially lowered their carbon emissions by 23% between 2005 and 2020, the equivalent of taking nearly 9 million cars off the road. They've also invested in energy innovation technologies to help meet tomorrow's electricity needs with speed and flexibility.

In Minnkota's case, approximately 42% of its generation capacity is already derived from carbon-free resources. The cooperative is also working to advance Project Tundra – an effort to build one of the world's largest carbon capture systems at a coal-based power plant in North Dakota. If the proposed project moves ahead, it would help retain a reliable and resilient power generator, while also significantly reducing Minnkota's carbon emissions.

The energy transition must consider threats to reliability and focus on the importance of allowing adequate time, technology development and the construction of desperately needed transmission lines to move electricity within regional markets. It is overambitious to believe this can happen by the current federal target of 2035.

Today's energy policy decisions will determine whether the threat of grid reliability challenges is our new energy reality. As state and federal policymakers re-evaluate their energy transition proposals in the wake of sobering summer reliability challenges, they should:

- Prioritize an adequate supply of always-available power resources to balance the increasing reliance on renewable energy.
- Promote the development of new transmission lines to carry electricity from where it's generated to where it's most needed.
- Facilitate coordinated, consistent, and timely agency permitting to speed the construction and maintenance of electric transmission and other critical grid infrastructure.
- Provide electric cooperatives access to the same level of energy innovation incentives that for-profit utilities have enjoyed for years.
- When you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging. Failure is not an acceptable option for the consumers and communities we serve.

Jim Matheson is CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association that represents the nation's more than 900 not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives. He previously served seven terms as a U.S. representative from Utah.

Mac McLennan is CEO of Minnkota Power Cooperative, the wholesale electricity provider for 11 member cooperatives in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota.

THE 3 Ts OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION

The energy industry is in the midst of a major transition and Red Lake Electric Cooperative is working to ensure its members maintain access to reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity. As changes are made to the power grid, it's important that reliability is prioritized and baseload resources – like coal, natural gas and nuclear power plants – are preserved to provide 24/7 production. While renewable resources are a growing part of our nation's energy mix (28028 Nicholas Gillund), they are currently not positioned to meet the continuous demand for electricity.

As we look to move to a lower-carbon future without sacrificing reliability or affordability, we must consider the three Ts of the energy transition – technology, transmission and time.

TECHNOLOGY

Major breakthroughs in technology will be needed to significantly reduce carbon emissions while ensuring power grid dependability. With coal and natural gas still required to maintain reliability for the foreseeable future, efforts to advance carbon capture technology should be supported. Red Lake Electric Cooperative and its wholesale power provider, Minnkota Power Cooperative, are evaluating Project Tundra, which would capture carbon emissions from a large coal-based power plant in North Dakota.

For renewable resources, there will need to be substantial advancements in battery capabilities, which would allow electricity to be stored and released when the wind isn't blowing or the sun isn't shining. This technology currently has operational limitations and is only able to discharge power for 2-4 hours at a time, when multiple days of storage/discharge are needed.

TRANSMISSION

Transmission lines also play a key role in ensuring reliability during the energy transition process. Energy often needs to be carried long distances to reach its users. Renewable generation facilities are typically located in remote areas that are far away from demand centers. Adding more high-voltage transmission infrastructure would allow more energy to be generated at those sites. Adding and updating existing lines (25281 Matt Derosier) can also eliminate any congestion on the lines that may cause energy generation to be reduced or be disrupted. Stronger transmission connections across the United States will help bolster reliability now and in the future.

TIME

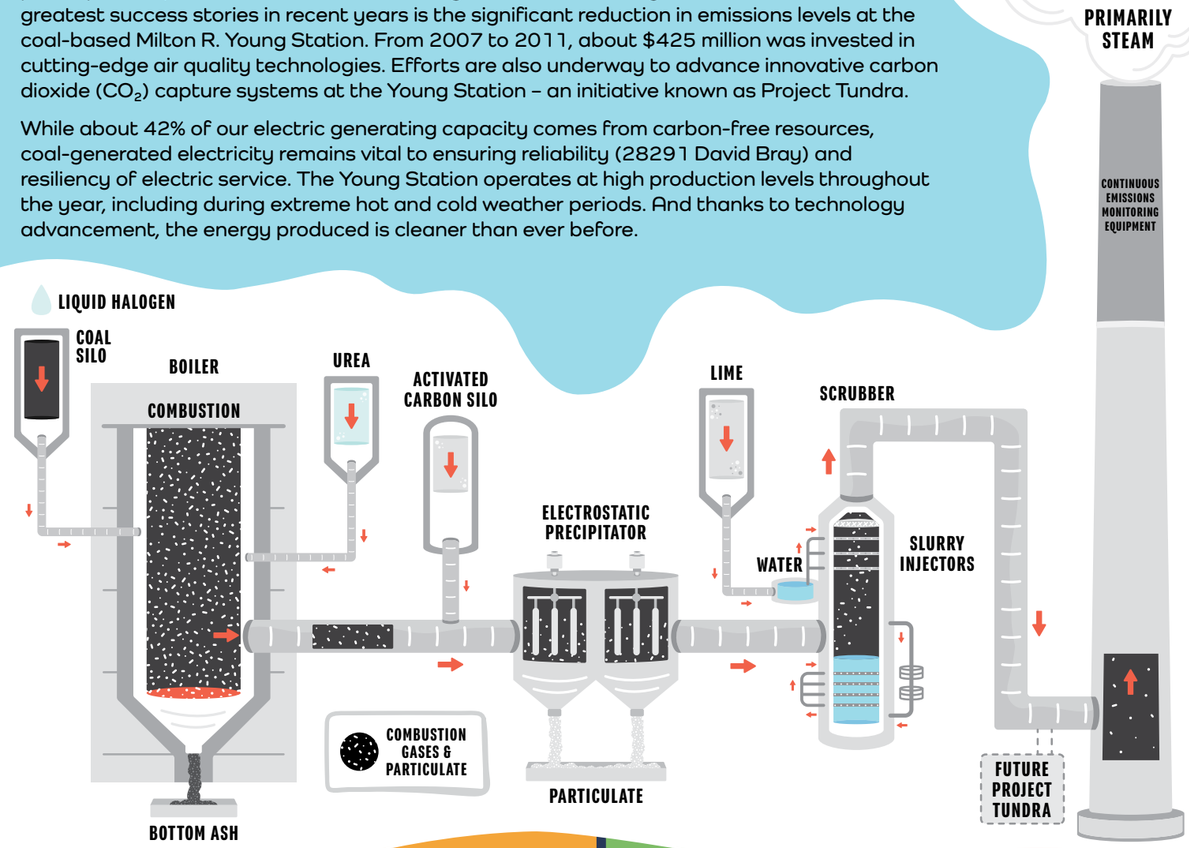
Perhaps the most important component of a successful energy transition is time. Developing new technology that is sustainable and reliable takes time. Building and updating transmission lines to transport energy takes time. Transitioning to new energy generation resources without jeopardizing the reliability of the grid will take time.

Sudden, extreme changes to our energy systems without proper planning has the potential for severe consequences. Recognizing that the energy transition will take decades helps ensure reliability and affordability can be maintained for the benefits of our local communities.

REDUCING EMISSIONS

Red Lake Electric Cooperative and Minnkota Power Cooperative, the region's wholesale power provider, are committed to maintaining a clean and healthy environment. One of the greatest success stories in recent years is the significant reduction in emissions levels at the coal-based Milton R. Young Station. From 2007 to 2011, about $425 million was invested in cutting-edge air quality technologies. Efforts are also underway to advance innovative carbon dioxide (CO_2) capture systems at the Young Station – an initiative known as Project Tundra.

While about 42% of our electric generating capacity comes from carbon-free resources, coal-generated electricity remains vital to ensuring reliability (28291 David Bray) and resiliency of electric service. The Young Station operates at high production levels throughout the year, including during extreme hot and cold weather periods. And thanks to technology advancement, the energy produced is cleaner than ever before.



MERCURY REMOVAL
Liquid halogen and activated carbon

A combination of liquid halogen and activated carbon absorb mercury from the flue gas. Fly ash and mercury (30720 Alan G Nemec) will be removed by the electrostatic precipitator later in the emissions control process.

NITROGEN OXIDES (NOx) REDUCTION
Selective Non-Catalytic Reduction (SNCR) and Over-Fire Air (OFA)

The Young Station uses a combination of SNCR and OFA to reduce NOx emissions. SNCR includes injecting urea into the boiler to break down the NOx, while OFA includes diverting a portion of the combustion air from the cyclones to limit the formation of NOx in the boiler.

PARTICULATE MATTER (PM) REMOVAL
Electrostatic precipitator

The flue gas passes through electrodes, which charge particulates (like dust) either positively or negatively. The charged particles are then attracted to collector plates carrying the opposite charge and removed.

SULFUR DIOXIDE (SO_2) REMOVAL
Scrubber

When the flue gas passes through the scrubber, it flows against multiple levels of spray nozzles containing lime slurry. A chemical reaction occurs between the sulfur dioxide in the flue gas and the lime slurry, effectively capturing the SO_2 and forming a common mineral called gypsum.

Need help to pay your electric bill? Help is only a phone call away!

Red Lake Electric is prepared to work with members who are in need of assistance paying their electric bills. For more information about the Cold Weather Rule, call Red Lake Electric Cooperative, visit our website www.redlakeelectric.com, or see MN Statutes, Chapter 216B, which governs disconnection policies (28725 Ehren M Hanson) of residential heating sources from Oct. 1 through April 30. Here are some common questions:

Can my heat be shut off in the winter?

YES, unless you take steps under the Cold Weather Rule (CWR) to protect yourself. You must contact Red Lake Electric Cooperative to apply for protection from having your heat shut off. This is true for all residential customers, including senior citizens and families with young children.

Will you disconnect me without my knowledge?

NO. RLEC will give you a "Disconnection Notice" on your electric bill. This will state the amount you need to pay as well as the date by which you must contact RLEC to avoid disconnection. If you do not contact us by the disconnection date, we will make a courtesy phone call reminding you to make your payment.

How can I keep my heat on or get reconnected if I am already shut off?

You must make and keep a payment plan with Red Lake Electric Cooperative. The payments don't have to be the same amount each month. RLEC will work with you to make suitable arrangements to help you keep your electricity. Once arrangements are made, you must contact Red Lake Electric Cooperative if you are unable to make a payment or your service may be shut off.

When I contact RLEC to apply for the CWR, what happens?

- You will make a CWR payment plan, which you must keep to be protected.
- If you and the utility cannot agree on a payment plan, you have 10 days to appeal to the Public Utilities Commission.
- The Commission will help you set up a payment plan.
- Your service will stay on during the appeal process.

What happens if I can't make my payments as planned?

If you can't make your payments, call RLEC ***immediately*** to make a new CWR payment plan. If you do not make your payments, your service may be shut off.

What if I need help reading or understanding notices from my utility?

- The CWR has a "Third-Party Notice" option.
- If you would like help applying for the CWR, you may arrange for another person to get a copy of any disconnection notices or other important information at the same time you receive it. This may be a friend, family member or anyone who is willing to help you understand the notices or set up a CWR payment plan. This person is not responsible for paying your bill. They are only agreeing to help you understand notices from Red Lake Electric Cooperative.

How do I sign up for Third-Party Notices?

Call Red Lake Electric for a sign-up form. The form must be filled out and signed by both you and the person you want to be notified and mailed back to the utility.

Are military personnel subject to a shutoff?

Minnesota law protects a residential customer if a member of the household has been issued orders into active duty, for deployment or a change in duty station if they are unable to pay their electric bill. You must call Red Lake Electric to set up a payment plan. For more information see MN Statutes, Chapter 325E.028 (Utility Payment Arrangements for Military Personnel).

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: 833-792-1046

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

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

Red Lake Community Action Agency
Red Lake, MN
Serves Beltrami County
218-679-1880
Fax: 218-679-4291

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.

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 56750-0430.

Homemade Stuffed Peppers Soup

Ingredients

- *3 tbsp olive oil*
- *1 small yellow onion*
- *1 green bell pepper**
- *1 yellow bell pepper**
- *1 large tomato*
- *1 lb ground beef*
- *3 cups beef stock*
- *3 tbsp tomato paste*
- *1 tsp dried oregano*
- *2 tsp dried basil*
- *1 tsp garlic powder*
- *1/4-1/2 tsp black pepper*
- *salt*
- *3/4 cup Jasmine rice ***

* *When it comes to the bell peppers, feel free to choose any colors you want. Choosing a couple of different colors will make the soup more fun, though.*

** *Jasmine rice is a personal preference but you can substitute long grain rice, Basmati rice, or even brown rice.*

Instructions

1. Dice all the vegetables first and set the aside.
2. Preheat a Dutch oven over medium heat and add olive oil.
3. Add diced onions and bell peppers and cook until they start to soften. Mix in diced tomato and cook for a few more minutes.
4. Move vegetables over to the sides and add ground beef to the center of the pan. Break it apart, cover the pot with a lid, and cook for a few minutes. After a few minutes, break up the meat some more and start mixing it with veggies. Close the lid and keep cooking until the beef is mostly done. Make sure to break up as many clumps as you can.
5. Mix in tomato taste and then pour in beef stock.
6. Season with oregano, basil, garlic powder, salt, and pepper, mix well and lower the heat to low. Close the lid but leave a small crack for the heat to escape. Cook for about 20 minutes.
7. Mix in rice, close the lid back up and cook until rice is done.
8. Serve right away.

Alternate option:

1. If you don't plan to eat all of the soup right away, you can cook rice separately and add some to individual soup servings. Cook the rice in salted water according to the package instructions *(27576 Jim D Tesch)* and add it to each bowl of soup as needed.
2. Store cooked rice separately from the soup. Make sure to keep it refrigerated in an air-tight food storage container.

Red Lake Electric Cooperative

LOOK UP FOR POWER LINES THIS HARVEST SEASON

Harvest is one of the busiest times of the year in our region, but no one is ever too busy to be reminded about the importance of electrical safety. Don't fall powerless to power lines by not taking the time to look up for potential hazards. Here are some simple things to keep everyone safe this harvest season.

LOCATE AND IDENTIFY

Make sure you, your family and your farm workers know where power lines are located on your property. Everyone should know the height of all your farm equipment and how high nearby power lines are to prevent accidental contact. If you need to work close (31783 Neal A Helle) to an energized line, use a spotter to make sure you and your equipment remain safe. Non-metallic items such as lumber, rubber and hay can conduct electricity depending on the dampness or dust contamination.

WORK AT A SAFE DISTANCE

It is best to always assume a power line is energized and dangerous. Make sure everyone understands that any contact with these lines creates a path to the ground for electricity and carries the potential for a serious - even fatal - accident. A good rule of thumb is to stay at least 10 feet away from all power lines.

LOWER BEFORE YOU GO

Lowering your equipment to the lowest possible setting is one way to not fall powerless to power lines. Make sure that extensions, portable augers (30852 Jessica C Morberg) and other equipment are under 14 feet tall before transporting. Wind or uneven ground can cause you to lose control of extended equipment and possibly make contact with a power line.

STAY AWAY AND STAY CALM

If your equipment ever comes in contact with an electric pole, do not get out and examine it. Call 9-1-1 and wait until the line has been de-energized before exiting your equipment. If your equipment catches fire or it is no longer safe to remain inside, do not touch any part of it as you attempt to exit. Cross your arms over your chest to protect yourself from creating any electrical pathways and jump clear of the equipment with both feet together. Bunny hop as far as you can away from your equipment keeping your feet together.