

# 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



DECEMBER 2023

## Merry Christmas AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

From your employees and directors  
at Red Lake Electric Cooperative

### HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

Red Lake Electric Cooperative's headquarters  
will be closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1.

*In case of an electric outage or emergency, please call  
the after-hours phone number at 218-253-2200.*

### Employees

|                   |                 |                  |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Kelli Brateng     | Branden Narlock | Brett Knott      |
| Steve Conely      | Cindy Pahlen    | Melanie LaCrosse |
| Javen Eidsmoe     | Troy Schmitz    | Warren Malwitz   |
| Stephanie Johnson | Darcy Cardinal  | Sam Olson        |
| Christie Klipping | Aaron Derosier  | Sam Pahlen       |
| Chris Knott       | Jordon Gervais  | Casey Thronson   |
| Laurie Malwitz    | Jenny Kelley    |                  |

### Directors

|                      |                   |                |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Cecil Anderson       | Bonnie Christians | Colette Kujava |
| Jenny Bernier-Linder | Aaron Chervestad  | Peter Mosbeck  |
| Stacy Blawat         | Mark Hanson       | Randy Versdahl |

### EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS



**Brett  
Knott**  
15 Years



**Melanie  
LaCrosse**  
15 Years



**Darcy  
Cardinal**  
10 Years



**Branden  
Narlock**  
10 Years



**Stephanie  
Johnson**  
5 Years

### DIRECTOR SERVICE AWARDS



**Cecil  
Anderson**  
5 Years



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#### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President ..... Stacy Blawat  
Vice President ..... Peter Mosbeck  
Secretary-Treasurer ..... Mark Hanson  
Directors ..... Cecil Anderson,  
Aaron Chervestad, Bonnie Christians,  
Colette Kujava, Jennifer 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:  
**Todd Knaack: (763) 516-0344**

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.*



## Reliable Power for Today – and Tomorrow

by Stephanie Johnson

**R**inging in a new year sparks a sense of renewed hope and optimism about the future. As general manager of Red Lake Electric Cooperative, for me, it's a time to reflect on where we are and where we're going. At the heart of this reflection, I think about ways we can better serve you, the members of the cooperative.

Our team at Red Lake Electric is always looking ahead, exploring ways to innovate and utilize new technologies to improve our services. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity (24940 John P Stich) to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important. We're committed to powering — and empowering — our community at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

So how are we working to ensure reliable and affordable power while adapting to a changing energy landscape and our community's evolving needs?

One critical component of reliable power is the mix of energy resources used to generate the electricity that keeps the lights on across our area. You may not realize it, but Red Lake Electric doesn't generate electricity. Instead, we purchase it from our energy provider, Minnkota Power Cooperative, and from there, we distribute it to homes and businesses throughout our community. Our current energy resource mix is made up of 57% coal, 34% wind, 7% hydro and 2% other sources.

We're increasingly using more electricity generated from renewable energy sources, but we still depend on a diverse energy mix to ensure reliable power that's available to our members whenever they need it.

In addition to managing a reliable energy mix, Red Lake Electric is using technology to enhance our local grid, limit service disruptions and improve outage response times.

Advanced metering infrastructure, also known as AMI, enables two-way communication between the cooperative and consumers. In the event of a power outage, AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters. AMI helps Red Lake Electric save money with real-time data, and ultimately improves power reliability for our entire community.

Proactive tree trimming is another way we limit service disruptions. Scheduled trimming keeps power lines clear from overgrown limbs that are likely to fall. As technology advancements become more accessible, we anticipate using advanced mapping software to better maintain the environment while providing more reliable service.

One of the best methods for improving our services to you is monitoring trends and leading practices from other electric cooperatives in Minnesota and across the country. Learning from other cooperatives is one of the many benefits (29392 Daniel J Kiviaho) of the cooperative business model because for us, it's about cooperation, not competition.

As we turn our focus to 2024, Red Lake Electric will continue working to provide the reliable, affordable electricity you expect and deserve — for today and tomorrow.

On behalf of the Red Lake Electric Cooperative, we hope your holidays are indeed merry and bright!

# Voices for GRID RELIABILITY

America's electric grid is beginning to face significant reliability risks. As more baseload and dispatchable power plants are retired without adequate replacement, the margin for error is becoming razor thin.

Minnkota Power Cooperative, Red Lake Electric's wholesale power provider, maintains a diverse resource mix that includes coal, wind and hydro power that contribute to a reliable grid. However, the Minnkota system is connected with other utilities across the central United States — from North Dakota and Minnesota down through Louisiana. Challenges in other parts of the country can contribute to reliability issues in our region.

Regulators, policymakers, utilities and others are voicing their concerns about transitioning too quickly toward intermittent resources — like wind and solar — without retaining the stability provided by coal, nuclear and natural gas power plants. Here's what some of the major entities responsible for reliability are saying.

## Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

*"We are heading for potentially very dire consequences, potentially catastrophic consequences in the United States in terms of the reliability of our grid."* — MARK CHRISTIE, FERC COMMISSIONER, AT A HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE, ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON JUNE 13, 2023.

## North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC)

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

*"... one of the important things that these plants provide is the ability for the grid to maintain voltage and maintain frequency and to resist disturbances. Other resources can't do that nearly as well as large spinning mass generation. And that's why the loss of coal plants and natural gas plants and nuclear plants is so concerning from a grid reliability perspective."* — JIM ROBB, NERC PRESIDENT AND CEO, AT A SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES HEARING ON JUNE 1, 2023.

## Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

*"The recent acceleration in the pace of fleet change is increasing risks to system reliability for MISO. Dispatchable generators that we need to ensure reliability are being removed from the system before new resources with the needed reliability attributes are being brought online."* — TODD RAMEY, MISO SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETS AND DIGITAL STRATEGY, AT A HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY, CLIMATE AND GRID SECURITY HEARING ON SEPT. 28, 2023.

## Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MNPUC)

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

*"A major reliability event will set us backwards. The public will absolutely revolt."* — JOE SULLIVAN, VICE CHAIRMAN OF MNPUC, AT A CONFERENCE HOSTED BY THE MINNESOTA SOLAR ENERGY INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION, ON OCT. 9, 2023 (COURTESY MINNPOST).

## Minnkota Power Cooperative (MPC)

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

*"Despite all the regulatory uncertainty, our board and staff have committed to the view that we are going to live in a carbon-managed world and we'll need to develop technologies and strategies to help us navigate this challenge. We want to be part of the solution, but there needs to be an understanding that America's electric grid can't be completely transformed overnight."* — MAC MCLENNAN, MINNKOTA PRESIDENT AND CEO, IN AN OCT. 9, 2023, ARTICLE ON PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RULES.



# NEW YEAR, NEW ENERGY EFFICIENCY INCENTIVES FOR 2024

Make your home more comfortable and energy efficient with help from Red Lake Electric Cooperative. Great rebates and incentives are available to help you upgrade your heating and cooling system, water heater and chargers for electric vehicles. Not sure where to start? Check out our rebate (27992 Kyle Nelson) list below for heating and cooling options. Contact Red Lake Electric Cooperative for expert advice on improving your home’s energy performance.

## ELECTRIC HEATING REBATES

*Must be on off-peak*

### ELECTRIC PLENUM HEATERS

Easily converts your existing fossil fuel furnace into a dual-fuel heating system. You are able to use the most efficient, cost-effective heating source – fossil fuel or electricity – at any time.

**Rebate of \$50 per kilowatt (kW)**

### ELECTRIC THERMAL STORAGE HEATERS

Draws electricity during off-peak hours when it is cheaper. Heat is stored in specially designed bricks to provide comfort 24 hours a day.

**Rebate of \$75 per kW**

### AIR-SOURCE HEAT PUMPS (INCLUDING MINI-SPLIT DUCTLESS OPTION)

Works just like a central air conditioner in the summer. In the fall and winter, they provide super-efficient supplemental heat.

**Up to 16 SEER: Rebate of \$300 per ton**  
**17 SEER or greater: Rebate of \$600 per ton**

### GEOTHERMAL HEAT PUMPS

Provides the highest efficiency for space heating and cooling available today. The system transfers heat to and from the earth using only small amounts of electricity.

**Closed loop: Rebate of \$400 per ton**  
**Open loop: Rebate of \$200 per ton**

### ELECTRIC UNDERFLOOR BOILER

A popular off-peak option because the system transfers heat consistently across the floor to reach people and objects, providing both comfort and efficiency. Applications include electric boiler with hydronic tubing.

**Rebate of \$75 per kW**

### OTHER ELECTRIC HEATING SYSTEMS

Options include electric baseboards, cove heaters, electric floor cable, mats and more.

**Rebate of \$25 per kW**

## ELECTRIC WATER HEATER REBATES

*Must be on off-peak*

100 gallon or greater

**\$500/unit**

56-99 gallon

**\$400/unit**

55 gallon or less

**\$150/unit**

New construction (50 gallon)

**FREE unit (primary residence only)**

### Bonus rebates:

**Add \$250**  
if converting from  
natural gas or propane.

**Add \$100**  
for new building  
construction (shops,  
cabins, etc.).

## ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGER REBATES

240V LEVEL 2 CHARGER  
*Must be on off-peak*

Electric vehicle or hybrid

**100% rebate**

Commercial – Forklifts, Zambonis, etc.

**\$50 per kW**



Residential  
Charger



Commercial  
Charger

All equipment must be  
new and installed on Red Lake  
Electric Cooperative’s system.

EQUIPMENT MUST BE INSTALLED ON RLEC’S OFF-PEAK PROGRAM.

Contact Member Services for more details!

**218-253-2168**

# AVOID MAJOR HOLIDAY STRESS WITH A MINI-SPLIT HEAT PUMP



Hosting friends and family during the holidays is stressful enough – you shouldn’t need to worry about pleasing finicky house guests. If you’re often expecting visitors who run too hot or too cold, you may want to consider a mini-split heat pump (or two) for your home.

The mini-split heat pump is perfect for spot heating (31223 Tiasha L Phelps) or cooling areas that are “never quite right” in terms of temperature. The technology doesn’t need ductwork, so it works incredibly well in house additions, shops and lake cabins. And it’s super easy to use – you can set it to run automatically, or you can just hand the remote control to Grandma.

Not enough to get you **PUMPED**? Listen to these additional benefits:

## VERSATILITY

The mini-split heat pump can be used any time of the year. A single system delivers heat in the winter and cools your home in the summer. Plus, you can install it on nearly any wall in your home.

## EFFICIENCY

The system only heats and cools the area that is necessary. On top of that, the heat pump technology simply transfers heat instead of generating it, which is much more energy efficient.

## SAVINGS

In addition to the money you will save through efficiency, the upfront cost of installation may be covered in part by a rebate from Red Lake Electric – \$150 per ton or more! *You could also qualify for our off-peak program, which would offer you a reduced rate on your heating and cooling bills.*

Contact your local contractor or electrician to get started on your mini-split installation. If you have questions about our off-peak program, rebates or requirements, give our office a call!





ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR

CONTINUING  
EDUCATION COURSES

Minnkota Power Cooperative, Red Lake Electric Cooperative and its partners will again provide an opportunity 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.

JANUARY 2024

Instructor Tim Pull will cover the 2024 National Electrical Code (NEC) changes and other important NEC rules. The seminars are approved in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota for eight hours of continuing education credit necessary for renewing electrical licenses. The classes will be held at the following locations:

Wednesday,  
January 10, 2024

Fargo Holiday Inn  
3803 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Fargo, ND

Thursday,  
January 11, 2024

Fargo Holiday Inn  
3803 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Fargo, ND

Thursday,  
January 18, 2024

Bemidji Eagles Club  
1270 Neilson Avenue SE  
Bemidji, MN

Tuesday,  
January 23, 2024

Bigwood Event Center  
921 Western Avenue  
Fergus Falls, MN

Tuesday,  
January 30, 2024

Minnkota Power Cooperative  
5301 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South  
Grand Forks, ND

Wednesday,  
January 31, 2024

Minnkota Power Cooperative  
5301 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South  
Grand Forks, ND

This marks the 36<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. Taking the class (21443 Bruce W. Anderson) on multiple days will not qualify for 16 code credits. The registration fee is **\$80 for eight code credits**. Registration can be done online at [www.minnkota.com](http://www.minnkota.com) and 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, please call **(701) 795-4292** or email any 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 continues

\$80 REGISTRATION FEE

FOR SALE ON BIDS

All units as is. Submit bids to Red Lake Electric by Jan. 17, 2024, at 10 a.m.



8-foot service body

- Total height about 6ft
- Inside working height a little over 4ft
- 6 storage side doors
- **Minimum bid: \$1,000.00**



2001 H&H 12t2 10K trailer

- Pintle hitch
- Electronic trailer brakes
- 14' 6" bed
- 4' 6" ramps
- **Minimum bid: \$1,000.00**



2009 International CC70S 4x4 with a C4042 Terex Digger Derrick

- 12,399 hrs, 160,261 miles
- Engine rebuilt at 10,063 hrs, 122,992 miles
- Automatic transmission, CC, front and jib winch, aux hydraulics
- MAXXFORCE Diesel Engine \*\*\*needs engine work\*\*\* (Has a broken piston cooling tube. Will need a piston and sleeve.)
- **Minimum bid: \$8,000.00**



2 Wheel Wire Trailer

- Pintle hitch
- No lights
- No license
- **Minimum bid: \$25.00**



The average home in our area can be powered for about **\$200 per month** – the price of a new winter coat.

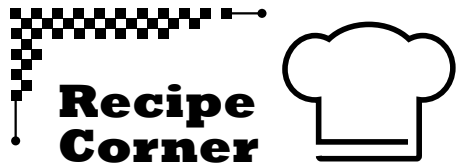
VALUING EVERYTHING THAT POWERS YOUR MONTH.



THAT'S THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY.

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.



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.

LOADED SCALLOPED POTATOES

These loaded scalloped potatoes are an essential comfort food! Layers of potatoes with a rich, creamy sauce, cheese, bacon and caramelized onions make for an unforgettable side dish. This comfort classic just got taken to the next level!

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 onions medium, thinly sliced
- 12 oz bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 4 tbsp unsalted butter
- 4 tbsp all purpose flour
- 3 cups whole milk
- 3 lbs potatoes, thinly sliced (use Yukon or Russet)
- 8 oz cheese (any cheese will work)
- salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Lightly grease a 9x13 or deep 9x9 baking dish with butter and set aside (28743 David Majer).
2. Add olive oil to a medium skillet and heat over medium heat. Add thinly sliced onion and salt and pepper, to taste. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally until onions become caramel in color. Remove from skillet and set aside.
3. Wipe skillet clean and cook bacon until crisp. You can alternatively bake the bacon while the onions are cooking, saving a little time. Remove bacon from skillet, drain grease, and wipe clean again.
4. Melt butter over medium heat. Sprinkle flour on top of butter and whisk to form a roux. Cook for 2 minutes.
5. Slowly add the milk, whisking constantly. Bring roux to a simmer (29324 Thomas N Ramsey) and let thicken just slightly, about 2 to 3 minutes after coming to a simmer. Remove from heat and set aside.

Assembly

1. Layer half of the potatoes, half of the caramelized onions, half the bacon, half the cheese, and half the sauce, in that order in the prepared baking dish. Repeat.
2. Cover baking dish with foil and bake for 1 hour. Remove foil and bake an additional 30 minutes or until potatoes are easily pierced with a fork. Remove from oven and let cool 10 minutes before serving.

# WINTER STORM PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

Cold, blizzarding weather is just part of life here in the North – being prepared comes with the territory. As you and your family start assembling your winter weather emergency kits, here is a helpful checklist (26507 Darrin J Olson) to make sure you have everything you need to keep everyone in your home safe.

## WHAT TO INCLUDE IN AN EMERGENCY KIT:



### Nonperishable foods

- Canned foods, crackers, protein bars



### One gallon of water per household member

- 5-day supply



### Pet food



### Extra blankets



### Extra warm clothing

- Hats, mittens, socks, scarves



### A first-aid kit



### Prescription medications

- 5-day supply



### Battery-powered radio or TV



### Flashlights with extra batteries



### Basic toiletries

- Toilet paper, facial tissues, diapers, wipes



### Full-charged portable chargers

**If your power is ever out for an extended period of time, here are some helpful tips to keep your home and appliances safe:**



At night, cover windows and doors with sheets, blankets or extra towels.



Allow a small drip from your faucets to prevent pipes from freezing.



Take precautions and never operate a backup generator inside your home.



Keep doors of unused rooms closed and place towels underneath to keep heat from escaping.



Unplug major appliances and electronics to protect them from power surges.

*Make sure to check out [redlakeelectric.com](http://redlakeelectric.com) for more information and updates during severe winter weather.*