



## *Member-first focus*

We're owned by the members we serve. With no outside shareholders, our priority is delivering dependable electricity at a fair cost.



## *Reinvesting in our community*

Margins are reinvested back into the electric system to strengthen infrastructure, improve reliability, and prepare for future needs. When there are extra margins, they're returned to members as capital credits.



## *Local control and accountability*

Our board is made up of local members who understand the needs of our communities and make decisions close to home.



## *Commitment to reliability*

Local crews know the system and respond quickly when outages occur—because being nearby matters.



## *Community-first service*

From supporting local schools and volunteer fire departments to offering energy-efficiency programs, we invest in initiatives that strengthen the communities we call home.

# Why Being a Co-op Matters



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

AROUND THE CO-OP ...

by **Mike Wade**

As your cooperative starts a new year, we are beginning to plan for the upcoming construction season. This includes line extensions to serve new loads, improvements to our electric system, pole replacements, and brushing and trimming along much of our right-of-way. Each is important to providing safe and reliable service to our membership.

### **Vegetation Management**

Trees along overhead power lines are a leading cause of outages especially during storms and high winds. Brush in our ROW easements prevents our line crews from accessing the lines to perform maintenance and restore power. Our vegetation management program is key to maintaining system reliability, increasing safety for our members and our lineworkers, and reducing long-term costs. While trimming and clearing can sometimes be inconvenient or unsightly in the short term, this important work helps prevent outages and improve electric reliability. In 2026, you will see our contractor

clearing along Hwy 113 east of Waubun, the Naytahwaush and Richwood areas, and around Bijou and Turtle Lakes south of Hwy 10.

### **Director Election**

The 2026 director election is now underway. At its December meeting, the Board of Directors appointed a Nominations Committee to begin this process. This member committee is responsible for nominating qualified candidates to run for director positions. In addition to the committee process, members may also be nominated by petition. Additional details about the director election and nominating process may be found in this edition of the Rural DeLight.

### **Rising Power Costs**

Although no one likes a rate increase, we were notified by our power supplier, Minnkota Power Cooperative, that wholesale electric rates would be increasing by an average of 4.1% on April 1, 2026. Like many electric utilities across the region, our cooperative continues to face rising costs related to power

supply and system operations and maintenance. While we work to control expenses and operate efficiently, some cost increases must be passed on through rates. Our rate consultant is currently working on analyzing these cost increases and will be presenting rate options to the Board at their January and February meetings.

### **Minnkota Surcharge**

Regarding rates, Minnkota Power is proposing a monthly surcharge in 2026 to address unexpected market power purchases in 2025. The Board of Directors is currently considering the adoption of a power cost adjustment that will be applied to each member's monthly bill from April through December 2026. We will continue to work closely with Minnkota and keep you informed as additional details become available.

As we navigate a challenging and ever-changing landscape, we remain committed to electric reliability and transparency to our members. Thank you for your continued trust and support.

## Highlights from the Board Room:

The Board of Directors held their monthly meeting on November 25, 2025. During the meeting, the Board received a report on the 2026 goals including highlights of 2025 accomplishments and discussed net metering rules.

A quorum of directors was present and the following actions were taken:

- **Approved** the board minutes and financial reports and statements for October 2025
- **Approved** the 2026 MREA Voting Delegate and Alternate
- **Accepted** the management department reports
- **Accepted** the Minnkota Power report
- **Accepted** the MREA report

The February regular meeting of the Board of Directors will be held at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, February 24, 2026.

## SAFETY TIP

### **Heart Health & Winter Safety**

February is American Heart Month. Cold weather and snow removal can strain your heart, so take it slow, lift with your legs, use proper tools, and take breaks. Know your limits — stop if you feel chest pain, dizziness, or shortness of breath.

Dress in warm, dry layers, and watch for signs of cold stress like numbness or confusion. Help prevent illness by washing hands often and staying home when sick.



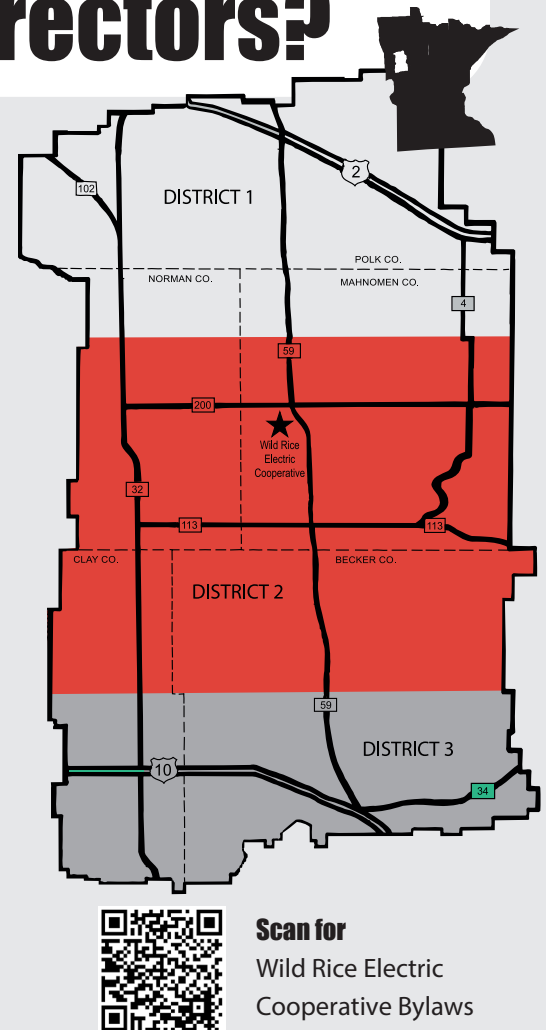
# Are you interested in running for the Board of Directors?

Cooperatives operate on democratic principles, allowing members to elect a board of directors from among themselves. Each member has one vote, regardless of the size of their investment or electric consumption, ensuring equal representation and voice.

April 7, 2026, Wild Rice Electric Cooperative will conduct the annual Board of Directors election. Seats up for election include District 1 (currently served by David Hamre), District 2 (currently served by Roger Winter), and District 3 (currently served by Jimmy Kaiser).

Based on the Cooperative's Bylaws, persons eligible to become a director shall:

- **be a natural person and a member in good standing** of the Cooperative, receiving Electric service at the member's primary residence in the district from which the director is elected prior to being nominated for director
- **have voting rights** within the district from which the director is to be elected
- **not be employed by**, materially affiliated with, or have a material financial interest in any individual or entity which either is directly or substantially competing with the Cooperative; or selling goods and services in substantial quantity to the Cooperative; or possessing a substantial conflict of interest with the Cooperative;
- **not be an employee** or not have been an employee of the Cooperative within the last three (3) years
- **not be a close relative** of an incumbent director or of an employee of the Cooperative at the time of election to the Board
- **never have been convicted** of a felony
- **agree to regularly attend** all board, regular and special meetings
- **be only one member of a joint membership**; provided that none shall be eligible to become or remain a director or to hold a position of trust in the Cooperative unless all shall meet the qualifications hereinabove set forth
- **if a natural person is appointed or elected by a member who is not a natural person**, then said natural person shall not be eligible for election as a director to the board. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a member that is a family farm corporation or an authorized farm corporation may appoint an individual stockholder of the farm corporation residing on or actively operating the farm to be eligible for election as a director to the board



**If you are interested in being considered for nomination or if you know a member who you believe would be a qualified candidate, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee before February 12.**

● **Mark Klinkhammer,**  
40223 US Highway 59  
SE, Winger, MN 56592  
PH: (218) 938-4100

● **Raymond Sundrud,**  
35563 300th St SE,  
Fosston, MN 56542  
PH: (218) 435-1029

● **Myles Bakken,**  
19754 380th St SE,  
Erskine, MN 56535  
PH: (218) 687-2107

● **John Darco,**  
2785 Brothers Point Rd,  
Waubun, MN 56589  
PH: (218) 473-2776

● **Marjorie Fabre,**  
1215 300th St,  
Waubun, MN 56589  
PH: (218) 473-2591

● **Karen Lefebvre,**  
37175 County Rd 111,  
Waubun, MN 56589  
PH: (218) 983-3128

● **Dwight Aakre,**  
7612 290th St S  
Hawley MN, 56549  
PH: (701) 371-4831

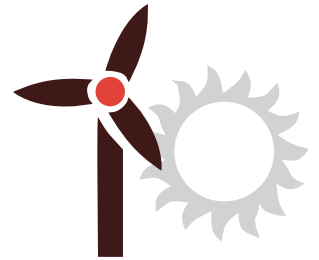
● **Bradley Lindstrom,**  
16912 County Hwy 1,  
Lake Park, MN 56554  
PH: (218 ) 238-5734

● **Richard Zurn,**  
25472 Whiskey Creek Dr,  
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501  
PH: (218) 847-8788

## Petition process

Any 15 or more members can make other director nominations in writing on or before Monday, March 9. Petitions for Nominations form can be found at [wildriceelectric.com](http://wildriceelectric.com) or contact Wild Rice Electric directly at (800) 244-5709. Director candidates may only be nominated by the committee on nominations or by petition. Voting will take place during the Annual Meeting. The director candidate receiving the highest vote for each District will serve on the Board of Directors until the end of their designated term.





## Cogeneration Notification to Members

In compliance with Wild Rice Electric Cooperative adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, Wild Rice Electric Cooperative is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from co-generators and small power producers whom satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. Wild Rice Electric Cooperative is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by Wild Rice Electric Cooperative Board.

Interested members should contact  
Wild Rice Electric Cooperative  
502 N Main St  
Mahnomon, MN 56557  
or call (800) 244-5709.

## Tree and Brush Maintenance

*with Tim Stock, Field Maintenance Supervisor*

### **Q. Why is Wild Rice Electric trimming trees and mowing brush in my area?**

**A.** Safety is the main reason. Trees or branches that touch power lines can cause outages, fires, and even serious injury. Clearing trees and brush also helps our crews safely access equipment when maintenance or repairs are needed.

### **Q. Will this really help prevent outages?**

**A.** Yes. A single tree contacting a power line can affect power for you and your neighbors. Keeping safe clearance around lines reduces outages and helps control costs for the cooperative and our members.

### **Q. How much vegetation will be cleared?**

**A.** We maintain about 20 feet of clearance on each side of the poles to help keep the system safe and reliable.

### **Q: How does Wild Rice Electric manage tree growth long-term?**

**A.** We follow a three-step maintenance cycle:

1. Trees and brush are cut or mowed from the corridor.
2. An EPA-approved herbicide is applied in mid-to-late summer to control re-sprouting.
3. The area is reviewed again 1–2 years later to catch any missed growth. After that, additional maintenance occurs every 8–10 years. These visits are usu-

ally less intensive because fewer trees and brush return. This proactive approach has greatly improved system reliability and public safety.

### **Q. What should I do before crews come to my property?**

**A.** Please help us prepare by removing personal property (such as vehicles, trailers, or equipment) from the right-of-way.

Understanding that wood and brush byproducts created during clearing will remain on your property and become the property owner's responsibility. If you would like help with cleanup please contact the cooperative ahead of time so we can discuss availability.

## State law for active duty military personnel



State law offers active military personnel additional payment options for their electric bills. The law covers disconnection, payment arrangements, appeal and annual notice to cooperative members. Similar to the state's Cold Weather Rule, an application must be completed and income guidelines exist. It's available for active duty military personnel, deployed or a permanent duty station change.

# WHY ARE ELECTRIC RATES RISING?

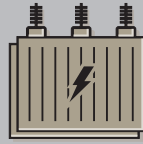
Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit organizations. When rates increase, it's because they must, in order to maintain the reliability, safety and service our members have come to expect. In April 2026, our wholesale power provider, Minnkota Power Cooperative, will increase its rate for member co-ops (including Wild Rice Electric Cooperative) by 4.1%. Under this new rate, Wild Rice Electric Cooperative will also need to consider a rate increase for our members.

Raising rates is never an easy decision. Minnkota worked with its board of directors and membership on a rate adjustment that would allow them to financially counter substantial supply chain and inflationary pressures that continue to build year after year. The cost of maintaining transmission infrastructure has rapidly increased since 2020, with items like transformers costing 88% more today than five years ago. After nearly eight years of consistently flat rates, these growing costs prompted the need for an increase in 2025 and 2026. However, if these increases were averaged over the last 10 years, the annual increase to your co-op has only been 1.3% – well under the rate of inflation.

Minnkota is also working to integrate data center loads in a manner that helps recover a larger share of its fixed costs through increased energy sales, thereby helping to moderate the need for future rate adjustments. These large-load members would not only fund 100% of the electric infrastructure necessary to serve their facilities, but would also provide significant additional revenue to support system operations. This reduces the financial burden on all other members. While some level of rate increase may still be necessary over time, the presence of these large consumers helps significantly flatten the trajectory of those adjustments.

We're committed to communicating our rate plans with our members as we evaluate our budget with our staff and board of directors. In the meantime, we thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate our next steps. We appreciate your membership!

## MATERIAL COST INCREASES SINCE 2020



88%

TRANSFORMERS

70%

TRANSMISSION POLES

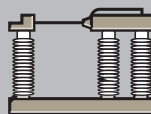
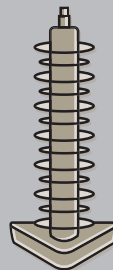


70%

INSULATORS

68%

LIGHTNING ARRESTORS

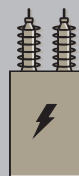
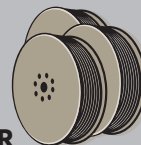


56%

SWITCHES

53%

CONDUCTOR



43%

CAPACITORS

# Ads

### For Sale

Yard King Snowblower, 10 hp Tecumseh engine, 6 speed forward, 2 reverse, excellent condition, no electric start, 29" cut, \$375, (218) 846-1906.

New 2012 RTS Spyder All Weather Cover - Reason for selling, doesn't fit my bike, \$25 (612) 600-2066.

Nice wood splitter on wheels, engine old doesn't run, \$350. "Lopi" wood burning stove w/ class A chimney, \$1,000 best offer. 14.5 tires & wheels, \$30. Firewood, \$200 cord. 5-ton porta power kit, \$100. 225-70-R19 tires, like new \$100 pair, (218) 935-5110 days.

2016 YZ 250 Yamaha overhauled spring 2025 extra set of plastics, fatty pipe w/ silencer, more, \$4,500. 8'x6' flatbed w/ steel bed on 6" channel frame, lights, \$300. Antique potato planter, \$125. Wet tile saw, \$50. Mr. Heater 35,000 btu contractors' series, \$100, text only (701) 405-4991.

Miele complete c3 cat & dog powerline canister vacuum cleaner w/ attachments. Good as is asking, \$400, (218) 473-2471.

Skid steer attachments both new & some used, heavy duty, stump grinders, wood splitters, ice scrapers, plus lots of others, (701) 261-3574.

Rear disk brake caliper kit & power brake. Booster bracket 1955-59 Chev pickup. New Branick strut machine. Snap on valve spring compressor. Box of many new U joints. Jiffy 8" ice auger. ATD engine stand. Brake controller kit for a pickup w/ a breakaway, (218) 849-8963.

2013 Arctic Cat 700 4x4 w/ 5ft Heavy Duty Snow Plow and factory mounted front winch 3000lb max cap. Olive Green color plow blade is yellow. 892 on the ODO. \$5200, (218) 790-3562.

Restored 1972 Arctic Cat Puma 440 \$850, (218) 204-1586.

Beautiful Whitney (Kimball) piano w/ padded bench. Also Bastien piano basic learning books, call/text (218) 350-7279.

Snowblower, walk behind, new tires as is. Chaparral snowmobile, excellent (218) 584-4603.

### Wanted

Briggs motor w/ horizontal shaft, (218) 935-5110.

Buying guns, gun estates, taxidermy. Let me know what you have. Paying cash. Call or text (701) 866-7246.

Chev El Camina or Chev short box pick up motor & trans not important, (218) 849-8963.

Mechanic to work on International (1950's) 350 Utility Tractor, Carburetor. And a 1992 Polaris 500 Sportsman ATV, Gear Shift. (507) 250-0809.

Older good 4x4 pick-up. 2 year old black angus heifer (good despo) (218) 584-4603.

Email ads: [info@wildriceelectric.com](mailto:info@wildriceelectric.com)

Mail ads: Wild Rice Electric Co-op  
PO Box 438  
Mahnomon, MN 56557



PERIODICAL

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Monday- Friday

**Telephone:** (800) 244-5709 or to  
make a payment (855) 949-5868

**Website:** wilriceelectric.com

**Email:** info@wilriceelectric.com

**App:** SmartHub



### Officers and Directors:

**Chair** ..... Jim Kaiser, District 3  
**Vice Chair** ..... Larry Sollie, District 1  
**Secretary** .. Mark Habedank, District 2  
**Treasurer** ..... Dave Hamre, District 1

**District 1:** Jeff Nornes

**District 2:** Greg LaVoy & Roger Winter

**District 3:** Randy Bjornson &  
Paula Okeson

**President & CEO** ..... Mike Wade

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

## ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at or below the state median income (\$71,999 for a family of four) to qualify for benefits. Applications must be received or postmarked by May 31, 2026.

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>, for more details and to access the application portal.

Contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance.

### Mahube Community Council

PO Box 76  
Mahanomen, MN 56557  
(218) 935-5022

### Mahube Community Council

PO Box 747  
Detroit Lakes, MN 56502  
(218) 847-1385

### Energy Assistance Program

3303 US Hwy 59/ PO Box 418  
White Earth, MN 56591  
(218) 473-2711 or  
(888) 458-1385

### West Central Minnesota Communities Action, Inc.

715 11th St N Suite100  
Moorhead, MN 56560  
(800) 492-4805/ (218) 685-4486

### Inter County Community Council

PO Box 189  
Oklee, MN 56742  
(218) 796-5144/ 888-778-4008

### Tri-Valley Opportunity Council

102 N Broadway/ PO Box 607  
Crookston, MN 56716  
(218) 281-5832/ (800) 584-7020

Wild Rice Electric Cooperative exists because of you, and we are dedicated to the people and communities we serve. If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for either of these programs, please contact us immediately to work out a mutually agreeable payment plan.

WILD RICE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC. MISSION STATEMENT

*Energizing our members' future.*