Red River Valley Cooperative Power Association

SPARKS

October 2025





SPARKS

Red River Valley Co-op Power is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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Rich Whitcomb, Editor Jennifer Erickson, Graphic Artist

> October 2025 Volume 69, No. 7

Halstad, Minnesota (USPS 509-300)

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Paul Baukol Hendrum Chairman
Curt Stubstad Sabin Vice Chairman
Bob Kinkade
Roger KrostueFisher
Trevor Sorby Glyndon
Kelsey JensenMoorhead

Rich Whitcomb Chief Executive Officer

Scheduled Board Meeting

Board meetings are held in Halstad at the cooperative office starting at 8:30 a.m. on the next-to-last Monday of each month.

> **Outages:** 800-788-7784

On the cover: Harvest is well underway in the Valley. A farmer combines corn north of Dilworth on a mid-October day.



Powered by Purpose

by Rich Whitcomb, CEO

his month, electric cooperatives across the country take time to reflect on the unique advantages of being part of a cooperative. It's also the perfect time to thank you — the members who make it all possible. For us, it's a chance to reaffirm the values that guide everything we do.

At your cooperative, I see purpose in action every single day. Unlike investor-owned utilities, our co-op doesn't exist to make profits for distant shareholders. We exist to serve you. That purpose is what sets us apart. It's why we were founded, and it's what continues to drive every decision we make.

At its core, being a cooperative means we are member-owned and locally controlled. Members have a voice in how our co-op operates. You elect board members who live right here in our service area and understand the unique challenges and opportunities our communities face. Decisions aren't made in corporate boardrooms hundreds of miles away; they're made here at home, by people who care about the same things you do.

This local accountability means we can stay focused on what matters most: delivering reliable, affordable electricity and providing real value to the people we serve.

We do that by investing in essential infrastructure upgrades and technologies that strengthen our local grid and improve electric service. We work hard to manage costs and keep rates as low as possible. And when storms hit or outages occur, our crews are here and ready to respond quickly, because we live here too.

But our commitment doesn't end at the power lines.

Co-ops were built to meet community needs, and that purpose extends well beyond delivering electricity. Whether we're supporting local schools or volunteer organizations, we are always looking for ways to improve the quality of life in the places we serve.

We're also planning for the future. Electric co-ops are working to ensure we continue to meet everyday needs with a balanced, reliable energy mix. We know our members care about affordability and dependability, and we're committed to delivering both.

That's the power of the cooperative difference. That's what it means to be powered by purpose.

Thank you for the trust you place in us. We're proud to be your local electric cooperative.





Watch the Wires is a safety campaign developed by Minnkota Power Cooperative and its member cooperatives in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota.

WATCHTHEWIRES.COM

PREPARE YOUR HEATING SYSTEM

FOR DEMAND RESPONSE SEASON

It may only be October, but the cold months of winter are sneaking up faster than any of us would like. To make sure you're not caught off guard, you'll want to confirm your home heating system is online and working properly. And if you're a volunteer member of Red River Valley Co-op Power's demand response program (often called off-peak), we have some pre-winter projections and advice to ensure you're set for the season.

According to outlooks from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), both North Dakota and Minnesota expect to see a fairly normal winter, with near-average snowfall and temperatures. However, as lifelong Midwesterners know, the only thing predictable about our weather is its unpredictability, so your co-op will be preparing for 200 hours

of estimated demand response through the winter. For perspective, 127 hours of demand response were deployed last winter.

When electricity demand spikes, such as during extended cold spells when many homes rely on electric heat, our power provider, Minnkota Power Cooperative, activates the demand response program across the region. During these times, enrolled homes are automatically switched from electric heat to an alternative backup heat source, such as fuel oil, propane or natural gas. This switch helps reduce stress on the power grid and avoids costly electricity purchases from the market, ultimately helping keep rates low for all members. Plus, program volunteers receive a nearly 45% reduction in their electric heating rate.

CHECK YOUR BACKUP HEAT

If you're part of the demand response program, it's critical to check your backup heating system now. This includes:

- Ensuring fuel tanks (propane, fuel oil, etc.) are filled
- Verifying that the backup system is working properly
- Confirming your system switches over automatically

Minnkota will be conducting a demand response test in early to mid-December, so now is the ideal time to make sure everything is in order. If you have any concerns, reach out to your co-op before winter weather arrives in full force!

> If you want to learn more about RRVCP's demand response options, give us a call at 218-456-2139 or visit www.rrvcoop.com.



THE PLENUM A D V A N T A G E

Why settle for just one way to heat your home this winter? With a plenum dual-fuel heater, you can utilize Red River Valley Co-op Power's off-peak energy program while still using your existing furnace system to keep your home at just the right temperature all day long.

HOW IT WORKS:

A plenum's dual-fuel technology pairs an electric heating unit with a propane, fuel oil or natural gas furnace – typically the one already in your home! The system automatically switches between the two heating sources based on the outdoor temperature, choosing the most cost-effective fuel source for you. There's NO guesswork involved.

THE PLENUM ADVANTAGE INCLUDES:



Lower energy bills

You save money on your electric bill when the system is utilizing the off-peak electric rate, which is nearly HALF OFF the standard rate!



Environmentally responsible energy

A plenum uses electricity as its primary heating source, making a cleaner, more environmentally friendly option for home heating. It only switches to your propane or natural gas furnace when needed.



Lasting comfort

Since your heating system flips back and forth based on your needs, you can lengthen the lifespan of your furnace and your plenum!

Besides being an effective tool to heat your home, you can receive a Red River Valley Co-op Power plenum rebate of **\$25/kW** when you install your system on our off-peak program!

To learn more about plenum rebates and off-peak heating rebates, just give our office a call at **218-456-2139** or visit **ValueofElectricity.com**.



IS YOUR OFF-PEAK **HEATING SYSTEM**

READY WINTER?

Since weather conditions and future wholesale power market prices make the amount of load control hours hard to predict, all our off-peak members are encouraged to have a reliable, automatic dual heating system in place and ready to use.

To ensure your total comfort this winter, consider the following questions about your backup heating system:

- 1. Is the system sized to heat your entire home or business?
- 2. Does it maintain an adequate comfort level?
- 3. Is it reliable?
- 4. Is it fully automatic?

Check current fuel prices and be sure to fill your propane or fuel oil tank. Also, make sure your tank is large enough to hold an adequate supply. Remember, prices typically rise as demand increases during the heating season.

Our member services department is glad to answer any off-peak questions you may have.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE FUNDING AVAILABLE

TO HELP LOCAL HOMEOWNERS AND RENTERS PAY THEIR ELECTRIC BILLS

Winter is right around the corner. Members who meet income guidelines and have trouble paying their electric bills are encouraged to apply for the Energy Assistance Program by contacting their local energy assistance service provider. If you aren't sure where to begin, you can contact Red River Valley Co-op Power for additional guidance on how to get started.

Household income must be at 50% or lower than the state median income to qualify. Grants up to \$1,400 to help homeowners or renters pay their electrical bills plus assistance for past-due energy bills are available. The eligibility is based on the past month of income.

HOW TO APPLY FOR THE ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Funding is limited and administered on a first-come, first-served basis. Households apply at their local Energy Assistance Program service provider.

HOUSEHOLD Size	1 MONTH MAX. Income
1	\$3,119
2	\$4,079
3	\$5,039
4	\$5,999
5	\$6,959
6	\$7,919

- Clay County Contact West Central Minnesota Communities Action at 1-800-492-4805 or go online to https://www.wcmca.org/ programs/energy-assistance-program/.
- Norman and Polk counties Contact Tri-Valley Opportunity Council at 218-281-9080 or go online to tvoc.org.

If you have questions or need help contacting these agencies, please call Red River Valley Co-op Power at 218-456-2139.



For information on great rebates, please call Member Services at 218-456-2139.



- View daily and monthly energy use.
- View and pay your bills online.
- · Go paperless and receive an email notice when your bill is ready to view.
- Compare energy use to changes in temperature.

SIGN UP FOR SMARTHUB: RRVCOOP.COM

For assistance, call us during regular business hours at 218-456-2139 or send an email to info@rrvcoop.com.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027) found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_ cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: 202-690-7442; or (3) email: program. intake@usda.gov.

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c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	•		
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CELEBRATE 5

CO-OP MONTH

Don't miss your chance to win an EGO
POWER+ 56-volt 12-in Single-Stage
Push Battery-Powered Snow Shovel

WITH US!

SIGN UP FOR CO-OP MONTH

(first step for chances)



There are two ways to sign up:

- Send a postcard or slip of paper with your name and account number to: Red River Valley Co-op Power, PO Box 358, Halstad, MN 56548
- 2. Email your name and account number, subject "Co-op Month," to info@rrvcoop.com.



Sign up or already be signed up for SmartHub



Sign up or already be signed up for autopay



Sign up or already be signed up for paperless billing

HOW TO GET ENTERED TO WIN:

You must complete tasks to gain up to four chances at winning a prize.

ALL ENTRIES
MUST BE
RECEIVED
BY 4 P.M. ON
THURSDAY,
NOV. 6!