

Red River Valley Cooperative Power Association

SPARKS

August/September 2026



SPARKS

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

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August/September 2026
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Halstad, Minnesota (USPS 509-300)

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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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: Mickie Paulsrud holds the very best and biggest beet she could find for the Heaviest Sugar Beet contest put on during Halstad Sugar Fest. Peter Steen of Halstad won the heaviest beet contest with a sugar beet that weighed in at 14.40 pounds.

MEMBER-WIDE SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Red River Valley Co-op Power recently completed its annual member-wide satisfaction survey, where over 2,300 members were asked to participate. The member responses were sent to the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®), a company that measures customer satisfaction across multiple industries throughout the entire United States.

For 2026, your cooperative received an ACSI score of 83 on a 100-point scale. Red River Valley Co-op Power's score is higher when compared to publicly measured electric investor-owned utility scores, cooperative utility scores and municipal utility scores reported in the syndicated 2026 ACSI Energy Utility Study.

A score of 83 places your cooperative 11 points higher than the average electric investor-owned utility score of 72, 9 points higher than the municipal utilities score of 74, and 6 points higher than the cooperative utilities score of 77 per the industry ratings.

For more information, please visit <https://theacsi.org/industries/energy/energy-utilities/>.



Results based on data provided by Red River Valley Co-op Power, collected during the month of June, 2026. ACSI did not regulate the survey administration or sample size. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC.

PLANNING TODAY FOR THE POWER NEEDS OF TOMORROW

Minnkota Power Cooperative is preparing for one of the most important power supply planning periods in its history – and our members are at the heart of our decision-making process.

As the wholesale power provider for Red River Valley Co-op Power and 10 other member cooperatives across eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota, Minnkota is responsible for making sure reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity is available not only today, but decades into the future.

That responsibility is becoming more complex. Electricity demand is growing. Power markets are changing. Environmental requirements continue to evolve. New technologies are creating opportunities, but also new challenges. At the same time, members continue to expect dependable electric service they can afford.

Minnkota takes the job of managing these issues seriously. The path ahead is being shaped by extensive planning, detailed analysis and a long-term commitment to the members and communities we serve.

Our approach is an all-of-the-above energy strategy. That means we're working to strengthen the coal, wind and hydro resources we already have in place, while adding new resources that make our system more diverse, flexible and reliable.

One important step already in progress is the development of the Flickertail Wind Farm near New Rockford, North Dakota. Minnkota has entered into a purchase power agreement to receive energy from the 370-megawatt wind project, which is expected to be completed in 2028. When complete, Flickertail will more than double Minnkota's current wind energy portfolio.

Because wind energy output changes with weather conditions, Minnkota also needs resources that can respond when electricity demand is high or when other resources are producing less. That's why we're closely evaluating the addition of natural gas generation in North Dakota.

This effort is connected to the development of the Bakken East natural gas pipeline, which is planned to move natural gas from the oilfields of western North Dakota to the eastern side of the state. Natural gas generation can start up, ramp down and adjust output to help match electricity supply with demand across the region. Minnkota is still determining the right technology, location and size for this potential facility,

but current planning is focused on having it available in the early 2030s.

At the same time, Minnkota's existing coal-based resources at the Milton R. Young Station in western North Dakota continue to provide tremendous value. This facility produces dependable, around-the-clock electricity and supports the reliability our members expect. That's why Minnkota continues to pursue Project Tundra, an effort to add carbon capture technology at the Young Station. If implemented, Project Tundra would capture CO₂ emissions from the power plant and help position it to meet potential future environmental regulations.

Project Tundra is being advanced by a technology developer with the significant help of state and federal funding. Importantly, the project is being structured with limited required capital investment from Minnkota, minimizing financial risk to the membership. If a decision is made to move forward, the facility could be online prior to the end of the decade.

These power supply decisions are being made for Minnkota's legacy members, including the homes, farms, schools and businesses served by your cooperative. You are the foundation of our system, and your needs remain at the center of our planning.

That same member-first approach also guides how Minnkota evaluates electric growth. New large electricity consumers can bring opportunity to our region, but only if they are served in a way that protects existing members and strengthens the overall system. That's the standard Minnkota is applying to the data center being developed near Harwood, North Dakota.

The data center will cover the costs for its dedicated infrastructure up front and pay its own way for all its energy needs. The agreement is designed to ensure this new load does not shift costs to existing members. In fact, the revenues from this data center project can help cover a portion of the costs tied to future power supply investments Minnkota is already pursuing.

With each of these projects now in motion, the work is moving from planning to action. The decisions ahead are significant, but necessary to keep power reliable. As a not-for-profit cooperative, Minnkota's focus remains on the people and communities we serve. That focus will continue to guide the decisions being made today for the power needs of tomorrow.



Mac McLennan
President & CEO

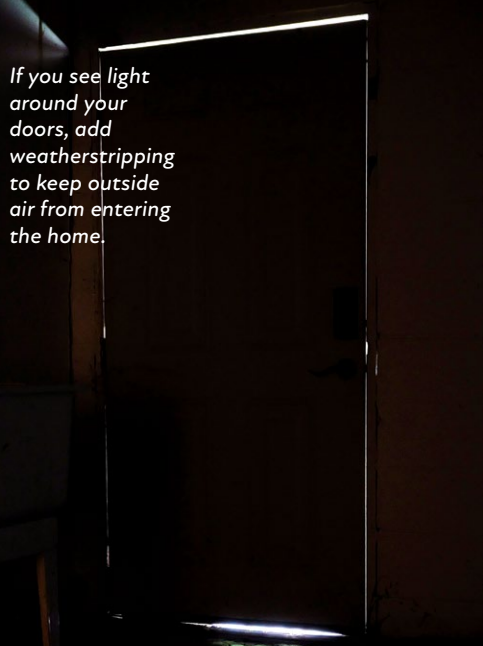
Minnkota Power Cooperative

EFFICIENCY MATTERS FOR COMFORT

By Miranda Boutelle, Chief Operating Officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon

Everybody wants a comfortable home. Did you know energy efficiency upgrades not only help you save energy, but can make your home more comfortable, too? If you find yourself continually returning to the thermostat on cold winter days or unable to find relief from heat on summer days, these are signs your home needs an efficiency upgrade.

No matter the home, energy efficiency upgrades often start with the same basic principle: Keep outside air from coming inside and keep conditioned inside air from leaking out. Insulation, air sealing, duct sealing and heating, ventilation and air conditioning upgrades can dramatically improve the comfort of your home.



If you see light around your doors, add weatherstripping to keep outside air from entering the home.



Energy-efficiency upgrades can help you and your two- and four-legged loved ones keep cool in summer months.

A fully insulated home, including attic, walls and floor, is more comfortable. It's like a blanket for your home. Air sealing is a lesser-known efficiency upgrade that keeps air from entering and exiting the home through cracks and gaps. Some air sealing can be done from inside the home, such as using expanding foam around plumbing pipes and drains under sinks, adding gaskets to outlets on exterior walls, caulking around windows or weatherstripping around doors.

Attics and crawl spaces offer additional opportunities to reduce air leakage and increase comfort. In the attic, sealing gaps around top plates, open soffit areas, cove ceilings and balloon framing can help keep conditioned air where it belongs. In the basement or crawl space, seal around plumbing pipes and drains, vents and electrical wires. If you need help, contact a local contractor.

As a self-proclaimed energy geek, you probably aren't surprised that my first move when my husband and I bought our first home years ago was to air seal and insulate. We sealed and insulated the attic, walls and rim joists in the basement. The difference in comfort was instant. Our house felt cozier and much more comfortable. The temperature swings from the furnace cycling on and off were dramatically reduced. The home felt warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.

Another benefit from insulation was a surprising reduction in noise from outside. We lived about 15 minutes away from the airport and close

to a busy road. When the windows and doors were closed, we could no longer hear the airplanes, and the traffic noise was almost unnoticeable.

Duct sealing can also improve the comfort of your home. Your ductwork delivers heated or cooled air in a forced-air HVAC system. If there are disconnections or leaks in the ducts, the air you paid to heat or cool may not end up where you want it. Disconnects and leaks can cause hot or cold spots in the home. An HVAC professional can inspect or test your ducts to make sure they are connected and sealed properly.

Air sealing and duct sealing can also improve the air quality in your home. Air leakage between the conditioned area of the home and the attic or crawl space can introduce dust, pollen, mold or other allergens you don't want to breathe. Reducing air leakage can reduce the chance of these things circulating throughout your home.

Upgrading to a heat pump can also boost comfort and efficiency. Heat pump technology is often about three times as efficient as electric resistance heat because it uses refrigerant to move heat instead of creating it. If you're upgrading from electric or gas heat, a heat pump can efficiently heat and cool your home, making it comfortable year-round.

If you already have a heat pump or any forced-air HVAC system, annual maintenance and regularly changing your filter maximizes system operation and comfort.

Consider improving your home's comfort by completing these energy efficiency upgrades. Your family — and energy bills — will thank you.

WATCH THE WIRES THIS HARVEST SEASON

Harvest season is often ripe with distractions. Even when you're trying to beat the rain or finish just one more acre, you must remember to stay alert to the power lines around you. One wrong move can be dangerous – even deadly. Share this **safety checklist** with your team before heading to the field.

SAFETY CHECKLIST

- ▶ **Know where power lines are located** before moving equipment and **plan your route** to avoid low power lines and narrow road crossings.
- ▶ **Lower equipment and fold augers, booms and other extensions** before moving to another site.
- ▶ **Maintain a safe distance** of at least 10 feet from all overhead power lines.
- ▶ **Look up** before raising equipment.
- ▶ **Use a spotter** when moving oversized or tall equipment.
- ▶ **Stay alert when visibility is reduced** by dust, low light, rain or fog, when power lines can be hard to see.
- ▶ **Inspect equipment height** before moving combines, grain carts, sprayers or other tall machinery.
- ▶ **Avoid parking or storing equipment** directly beneath power lines.

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN.

If equipment contacts a power line or pole, follow these steps:

1 Stay inside the cab

2 Call 9-1-1

3 Wait for responders

IF THERE IS SMOKE/FIRE:



Cross your arms across your chest



Jump out with your feet together (don't touch the ground and vehicle at the same time)



Shuffle or bunny hop far away (feet always together)

SAFETY KIT

Take time to train all farm workers on power line hazards before harvest begins. If you would like a free Watch the Wires safety kit for your team, visit watchthewires.com for details.



WATCHTHEWIRES.COM

COLD WEATHER RULE

In accordance with Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule (216B.097), electric service cannot be disconnected for nonpayment between **Oct. 1 and April 30** if electricity is the primary heat source and all of the following statements apply:

- Your household income is at or below 50% of the state median household income. Income may be verified on forms provided by Red River Valley Co-op Power or by the local energy assistance provider (*see right sidebar*).
- You enter into and make reasonable and timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
- You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills from Red River Valley Co-op Power.

Please note that the Cold Weather Rule does not completely stop winter disconnects.

Before disconnecting electric service to residential members between Oct. 1 and April 30, Red River Valley Co-op Power must provide:

- **A 30-day mailed notice or 15-day hand-delivered notice**
- **A statement of members' rights and responsibilities**
- **A list of local energy assistance providers**
- **Forms to request Cold Weather Rule protection**
- **A statement explaining available payment plans and other options to continue service**

ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

This program is federally funded and can help low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at 50% of the state median income to qualify for benefits.

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply, visit the MN Dept. of Commerce Energy Assistance website at <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/> for more details and to access the application portal. Or simply contact your county's EAP service provider.

If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and regardless of whether you qualify for either of these programs, please contact Red River Valley Co-op Power to set up a payment plan.

LOCAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.

1407 Erskine Street
Crookston, MN 56716
(218) 281-9080 or (866) 264-3729
(Norman County & W. Polk County)

West Central MN Community Action

411 Industrial Park Blvd.
Elbow Lake, MN 56531
(800) 492-4805
(Clay County Only)

REAL POWER REQUIRES REAL DIVERSIFICATION

Lignite Coal



PROS

- Abundant, domestic fuel source
- Can reliably run 24 hours per day
- Cost-competitive with other resources

CONS

- Currently difficult to permit and build new coal plants
- Can be challenging to ramp up and down to accommodate renewable production
- Higher CO₂ intensity than natural gas, although CO₂ capture technology is advancing

Natural Gas

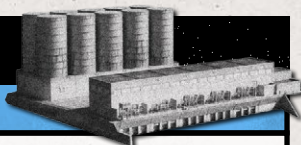
PROS

- Lower CO₂ emissions than coal
- Has been low-priced in recent years
- Can be run 24/7 or used during peak events
- Flexible operation

CONS

- Fuel costs are becoming increasingly volatile
- Pipeline infrastructure still catching up to projected demand
- Potentially more expensive to install CO₂ capture technology

Hydro



PROS

- No fuel cost
- Low-cost energy to consumer
- No air emissions
- Flexible operation

CONS

- Currently difficult to permit
- Affects fish and wildlife habitat
- Alters the natural flow of rivers
- Virtually no resources in development (some dams being removed)

Solar

PROS

- No fuel cost
- No air emissions

CONS

- Has intermittent production
- Requires investment in backup generation resources
- Solar panels take a larger land footprint
- Production affected by clouds, snow and extreme cold temperatures

You've likely heard the term "all-of-the-above energy."

It's the idea that since all generation resources have their respective benefits and challenges, the most strategic path to affordable, reliable and sustainable electricity is to use a blend of technologies. If one resource is emissions free but only generates when the weather is right, another resource is there to pick up the slack. If one technology can ramp up and down quickly but experiences volatile fuel costs, another resource is waiting in the wings.

Not all resources are created equal. That's why we need an all-of-the-above approach for **Real Power Now**.

VISIT REALPOWERNOW.COM

Nuclear

PROS

- No air emissions
- Can run reliably 24 hours per day

CONS

- High capital cost and increasingly expensive fuel
- Radioactive waste must be properly disposed of and monitored
- Currently difficult to permit
- Cannot ramp up and down to accommodate renewable production

Wind

PROS

- No fuel cost
- No air emissions
- Cost-competitive with other resources

CONS

- Has intermittent production
- Requires investment in backup generation resources
- Turbines take a larger land footprint
- Wind farms can impact bird and wildlife populations
- Cannot operate in extreme cold or wind conditions

Battery Storage

PROS

- No air emissions
- Can be dispatched when needed
- Pairs well with renewable resources

CONS

- Costly to deploy and requires investments in other generation resources to charge the batteries
- Can only dispatch for 2-4 hours at a time when energy can be needed for days
- Battery components require significant amounts of rare earth elements, which are almost exclusively produced overseas



**RED RIVER VALLEY
CO-OP POWER**

SAVE MONEY AND ENERGY IN 2026 WITH ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATES!

Energy efficiency rebates for members remain in effect for 2026. Please see the chart below for a sample of incentives.

EQUIPMENT	SPECIFICATIONS	REBATES
Air-source heat pump	> 16 SEER	\$500/ton*
Ground-source heat pump	Energy Star-rated	\$500/ton*
Electric water heater	Min. 80-gallon capacity, must be on off-peak program	\$300-\$650 per unit
Off-peak electric heat (plenum, baseboard, hanging heater, etc.)	Must be resistance electric on off-peak program	\$25/kW*
Electric boiler, brick storage, slab storage	Must be on off-peak program	\$45/kW*
Electric vehicle (EV) charger	240V-rated Level 2 charger on off-peak program	\$50/kW/limit \$750 per account

Every install must be new equipment and provide proof of purchase unless site verification is approved.

**These amounts include a rebate from Minnkota Power Cooperative, which has a capped rebate, so call for details.*

All incentives, criteria and guidelines for resident and business members can be found at rrvcoop.com or by calling **800-788-7784**.

All criteria are listed on the rebate form.