

# 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*



## WATCH THE WIRES.

The idea seems easy enough.

But when you're rushing to plant or get the harvest out of the ground, you might forget about those power lines on the field's edge.

Take a moment to talk to your team about how to avoid equipment contact with power lines and poles – and what to do if contact occurs.

The reminder could save a life.

Learn more and request a free safety kit from your electric cooperative system at [WatchtheWires.com](http://WatchtheWires.com).

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



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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 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.

NEWS FROM THE OFFICE

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 Lake Electric Cooperative'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 (23172 Tim Benedict) 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 50% 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 Red Lake Electric Cooperative's demand response options, give us a call at 218-253-2168 or visit redlakeelectric.com.

Headquarters Progress

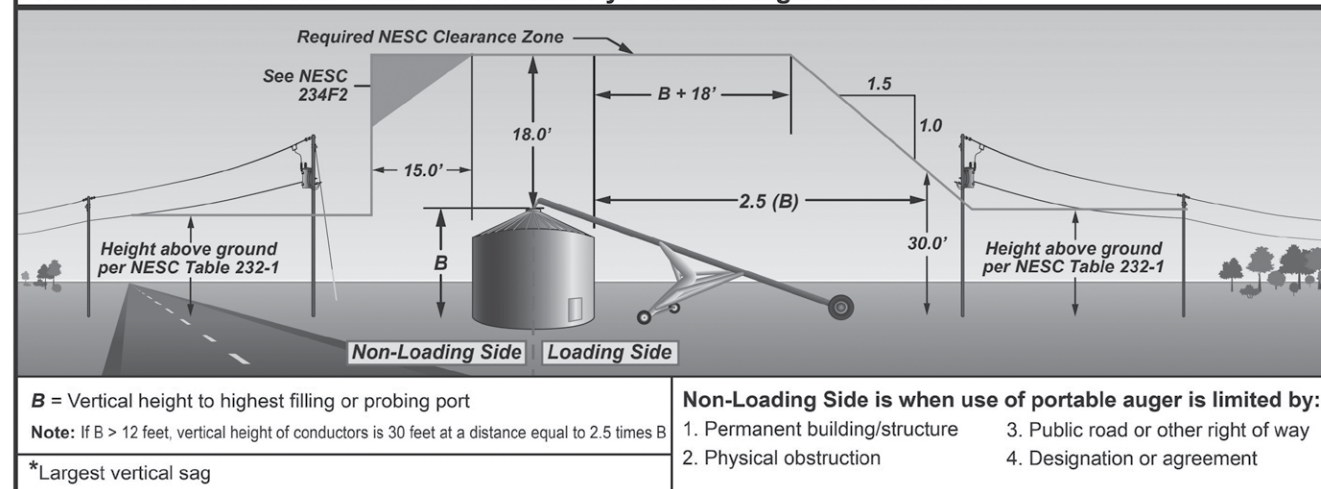
Back in late July, crews kicked off groundwork for our new headquarters, and a lot has happened since then! Tons of dirt have been moved and hauled out, and the footings are now in place with plenty of concrete poured. Over the next few weeks, you'll start to see the building really take shape. Mid-October is when the steel stud walls for the office go up, and then in early November, the pre-cast shop walls will be installed. Exciting progress is on the way!

October is Co-op Month

This month, electric cooperatives (31914 Brock B Olson) nationwide are celebrating National Co-op Month, a time to recognize the unique benefits of the cooperative model. It's also an opportunity to thank you – our members – for making it all possible.

Application Guide for 2023 NESC - see NESC for details and exceptions

Clearance Over\* or Near Grain Bins Loaded by Portable Auger NESC 234F2



B = Vertical height to highest filling or probing port
Note: If B > 12 feet, vertical height of conductors is 30 feet at a distance equal to 2.5 times B
\*Largest vertical sag
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FEDERATED RURAL ELECTRIC INSURANCE EXCHANGE

Plan Ahead for Grain Bin Placement

The National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) sets specific requirements for placing grain bins near overhead power lines. Clearance distances depend on the bin's height and whether it will be filled with a stationary or portable auger or elevator.

Before installing a grain bin, ensure the chosen location meets all NESC clearance guidelines. If a bin is placed too close to overhead lines, it may need to be relocated—or the power line adjusted—at the owner's expense.

For more information, contact Red Lake Electric Cooperative at 218-253-2168 or 800-245-6068.



Cheesy Beef Enchilada Tortellini

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 (9 oz) package refrigerated cheese tortellini
- 1 (10 oz) can red enchilada sauce
- ½ cup cream cheese
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- ½ medium onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh cilantro (optional, for garnish)

INSTRUCTIONS

- In a large skillet over medium heat, sauté the diced onion until translucent (3–4 minutes). Add the garlic (24749 Dean Dupont) and cook for another 30 seconds.
- Add ground beef, season with salt, pepper, chili powder and cumin. Cook until browned, then drain excess fat.
- Pour in the enchilada sauce and bring to a simmer.
- Add cream cheese in chunks and stir until fully melted and combined.
- Fold in the cheese tortellini. Cook on medium-low heat for 5–7 minutes until tender and heated through.
- Sprinkle shredded mozzarella on top. Cover and cook for 2–3 minutes, or broil until cheese is bubbly and slightly golden.

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.

In observation of Veterans Day, Red Lake Electric headquarters will be closed Tuesday, Nov. 11.

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



# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHTS

## SEASONAL HELP



### Kaleb Stolpa

Kaleb Stolpa graduated from Crookston High School and went on to attend Minnesota State Community & Technical College in Wadena. He joined Red Lake Electric in May 2025 as a seasonal lineworker. Kaleb says his favorite part about working at RLEC has been gaining valuable hands-on experience in the trade and learning a lot along the way. After his seasonal work wraps up, he plans to find a winter job until work picks up again next year or find a position with a contractor. Outside of work, Kaleb enjoys working on projects and riding snowmobiles. Kaleb's favorites include the movie The Goonies and enjoying a bacon cheeseburger and Dr. Pepper.

### Chase Proulx

Chase Proulx graduated from Crookston High School and continued his education at Minnesota State Community & Technical College in Wadena. He joined Red Lake Electric in May 2025 as a seasonal lineworker. Chase says his favorite part about working at RLEC has been getting his foot in the door, gaining valuable hands-on experience, and working alongside the crew. After his seasonal position, he hopes to secure a full-time job in the area to begin his apprenticeship. Outside of work, Chase enjoys wrenching on anything with an engine, hunting, fishing, riding snowmobiles and ATVs, and spending time with friends and family. Some of his favorites are Need for Speed and enjoying a bacon cheeseburger and a Coke. Football is his go-to sport, and one of his family's favorite traditions is deer hunting together each year.

## BE ON THE HUNT FOR SAFETY

Wearing a bright orange vest, keeping your finger off the trigger until you're ready to shoot, and only pointing at your target. These are some of the safety measures associated with hunting, and electrical safety should be added to the list.

Never shoot near or toward power lines, power poles, transformers or substations. A stray bullet could not only damage equipment, potentially interrupting electric service, but could be deadly to the shooter. Damage to the conductor could drop the line to the ground, causing a possibility of electrocution to those nearby.

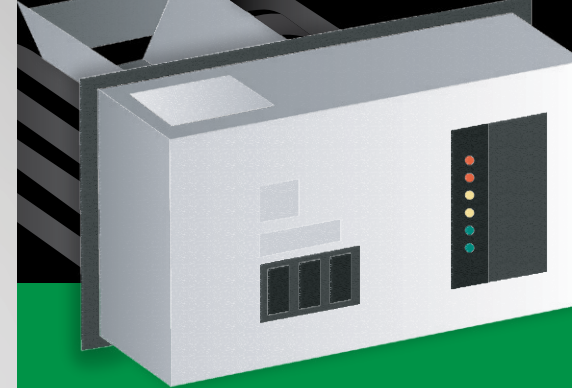
### Hunters are urged to follow these safety tips while out hunting:

- Familiarize yourself with the location of power lines and equipment on land where you shoot.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.

- Take notice of warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment on the poles can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Anything attached to a pole, except for utility equipment, is an obstruction and poses a serious hazard to utility workers.

Don't make lineworkers hunt for problems caused in a hunting area. Sometimes damage isn't noticed for several weeks (22465 Lee Larock) or months, or unless an outage occurs.

Keep yourself and your utility safe this hunting season. For more electrical safety tips, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://SafeElectricity.org).



# THE PLENUM ADVANTAGE

Why settle for just one way to heat your home this winter? With a plenum dual-fuel heater, you can utilize Red Lake Electric Cooperative's off-peak energy program while still using your existing furnace system (30326 Barette D Boutain) 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.

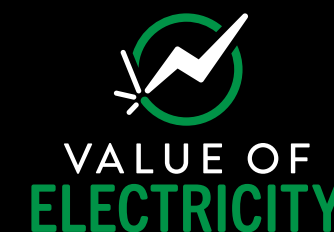


#### Lasting comfort

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 Lake Electric Cooperative 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 **218-253-2168** or visit [ValueofElectricity.com](https://ValueofElectricity.com).







# Operation Round Up® grants total \$13,900

The Red Lake Electric Trust board met recently and awarded 19 grants to area non-profit and community organizations that totaled \$13,900. Since its inception in 1993, 1,144 Operation Round Up grants totaling \$710,000 have been gifted to area community organizations. The Red Lake Electric Trust receives money for grants (28878 Lisa Thompson) from the Operation Round Up program administered by the Red Lake Electric Cooperative. Today, 98% of Red Lake Electric's members voluntarily "round up" their monthly bill for the Operation Round Up program.

*The following two organizations were awarded Round Up funds to help the disadvantaged.*

- **Red Lake County Victim Services:** \$500 to help with expenses for victims of a crime.
- **Falls DAC (TRF):** \$400 to help purchase music/karaoke equipment for client use.

*Six area grants were awarded for the general public.*

- **Pennington & Red Lake County Public Health & Home Care:** \$500 to help parents of new babies by sending out information packets.
- **Tri-River Pioneers:** \$500 to help expand building for handicap accessibility.
- **Aurora Resource Center:** \$500 to help support women, children and infants through education and resources.

- **Goodridge Veterans Memorial Park:** \$500 to help purchase and install new lighting for flags.
- **Goodridge Lion Tamers:** \$500 to purchase speakers and a refrigerator with a freezer for the hall.
- **Inter-County Community Council:** \$500 to help fund the Reach Out for Warmth program.

*Eight area emergency service providers were awarded grants.*

- **Red Lake Falls Volunteer Ambulance Service:** \$1,000 to help purchase AED unit and First In bags.
- **Plummer Volunteer Fire Department:** \$1,000 to help purchase new safety light bar and on-board air compressor for pumper truck.
- **RLF Volunteer Fire Dept:** \$1,000 to help update fire equipment and tools.
- **Goodridge Area Fire and Rescue:** \$1,000 to help outfit new EMS vehicle and update computer/printer.

- **Oklee Fire Department:** \$1,000 to help purchase grass rig skid and other needed equipment.
- **Viking Fire and Rescue:** \$1,000 to help upgrade volunteer personal protective equipment.
- **St. Hilaire Fire & Rescue Department:** \$1,000 to help update equipment such as turnout gear.
- **TRF Volunteer Fire Department:** \$1,000 to replace thermal imaging camera that is currently out of service.

*Monies to benefit the youth were awarded to these two organizations:*

- **TRF Chapter of the MN Deer Hunters Association:** \$500 to help fund fall youth day event.
- **Satisfy the Hunger Backpack Program:** \$500 to help purchase food for students in need to bring home for the weekend.

*One organization that provides help and service to area seniors received the following grant:*

- **Goodridge Senior Citizens Center:** \$500 to help repair bathroom facilities.

The RLE Trust Board of Directors determines grants two times per year, in March and September. Serving on the board are: Stacy Bierman - President, Thief River Falls; Pamela Vettleson - Vice President, Thief River Falls; and Laura Kasprowicz - Secretary/Treasurer, Plummer. Ex-officio directors are Bonnie Christians of Crookston and Lowell Stave of Grand Forks, representing Red Lake Electric Cooperative. Grant applications (26079 John Schindler) are available at the Red Lake Electric Cooperative Office or by visiting their website at [redlakeelectric.com](http://redlakeelectric.com). The next deadline for Operation Round Up grant applications is **February 27, 2026**.

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

## Did you know?



\$ FOR A DAY OF ELECTRICITY = \$ FOR A LARGE PUMPKIN SPICE LATTE



\*comparison based on average household energy usage



## YOU HAVE THE POWER TO

- 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:

[redlakeelectric.com](http://redlakeelectric.com)



For assistance, call us during regular business hours at 218-253-2168 or send an email to [info@redlakeelectric.com](mailto:info@redlakeelectric.com).

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# 5 REASONS TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

Every October for National Co-op Month, Red Lake Electric Cooperative likes to take a moment to reflect on how grateful we are to be serving you – our friends and neighbors. You see, being a member of a co-op has a lot of perks that you won't find as a customer of an investor-owned utility (IOU).

## 1 EVERY MEMBER IS AN OWNER, NOT JUST A CUSTOMER.

Electric co-ops are **member-owned**, not owned by shareholders. That means your voice matters and the co-op works for your benefit, not for profit.



## 2 YOUR COMMUNITY. YOUR DECISIONS.

**Local control and accountability** is important. Co-ops are governed by a board of directors elected by members, often your neighbors. Decisions are made locally, not in a corporate office far away.



## 3 MORE VALUE STAYS WITH YOU, NOT WALL STREET.

Unlike IOUs, not-for-profit co-ops don't pay dividends to shareholders. Any revenue above operating costs is returned to members as capital credits or reinvested to improve service.



## 4 PURPOSE OVER PROFIT.

Co-ops prioritize **service, reliability, safety and community needs** – not just the bottom line. Many also lead the way in energy efficiency programs and sustainable energy initiatives.



## 5 WHEN YOU SUPPORT YOUR CO-OP, YOU SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY.

Electric co-ops were **built by the communities they serve**. They invest locally, support schools, sponsor scholarships, and help neighbors in need through programs (26713 Mary A Olson) like Operation Round Up.