

# 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



## 2025 DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26 | 10:30 A.M. | LEGACY EVENT CENTER | THIEF RIVER FALLS

3

**DISTRICT 3**

Colette Kujava

6

**DISTRICT 6**

Randy Versdahl



**NEW DIRECTOR NEEDED:**

Versdahl not seeking reelection

9

**DISTRICT 9**

Peter Mosbeck

## OFFICIAL NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

All members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc. are hereby notified of its annual meeting. The annual meeting will take place at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 26, 2025, at the Legacy Event Center in Thief River Falls.

The meeting agenda includes year 2024 in review, financial reports and election of directors. Door prizes will be awarded, and lunch will be served. Please contact general manager Stephanie Johnson to make arrangements for dietary needs.

All members are encouraged to attend.

/s/ Colette Kujava, Secretary

## DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS PETITIONS DUE FEBRUARY 24

Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc., is organized as a cooperative and is owned by its members. The membership elects a board of directors to represent them in the operation of the cooperative. Three directors will be elected at the 2025 Annual Meeting scheduled for March 26 at the Legacy Event Center. The directors whose terms expire in 2025 are Colette Kujava, District 3; Randy Versdahl, District 6; and Peter Mosbeck, District 9. Randy Versdahl has decided not to run for reelection.

All nominations will be done by petition, including the incumbents. Any 10 or more members who reside in Districts 3, 6 or 9 may nominate an eligible member for a director position in that district. These names will be placed in the nomination at the annual meeting. If there is more than one nomination per district, the nominees' names will then be placed on the election ballot at the annual meeting March 26 at the Legacy Event Center.

Petition forms are available at the RLEC office in Red Lake Falls. Contact Stephanie Johnson, cooperative manager, at 800-245-6068 or 218-253-2168 for more information.

**The cooperative must receive the completed petition no later than the close of business at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 24, 2025.**

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**OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

President ..... Peter Mosbeck  
Vice President ..... Bonnie Christians  
Secretary-Treasurer ..... Colette Kujava  
Directors ..... Cecil Anderson, Mark Hanson,  
Jennifer Benier-Linder, Randy Versdahl,  
Lars Dyrud, Krist Olson  
Stephanie Johnson ..... General Manager  
Steve Conely ..... Manager of Electric  
System Operations  
Kelli Brateng ..... Manager of Member Services  
Christie Klipping ..... Manager of Finance & Admin.

**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.*



## Understanding factors that impact your energy bills

by Stephanie Johnson

**F**ebruary brings some of the coldest weather of the year, and as our home heating systems work harder and longer to keep us warm, we typically see higher energy bills. There are a few key factors that affect electricity prices, as well as a few ways you can make a meaningful impact on home energy savings.

When you receive your monthly bill from Red Lake Electric Cooperative, you are provided with a summary of how much electricity you used during the billing cycle. You can even see how electricity use may have spiked on days when you used more electricity, such as a particularly chilly day or when relatives were staying with you. But you might be surprised to learn that beyond your monthly energy consumption, there are external factors that can impact the cost of electricity.

**Fuel prices**

Red Lake Electric purchases electricity from our power generation partner, Minnkota Power Cooperative, at a wholesale cost, then we deliver that power to our local communities. The cost of generating and transmitting electricity from our generation partner accounts for a significant portion of the cost to provide electric service to local homes and businesses — and the cost of fuels that are used to generate that electricity, such as natural gas and coal, fluctuate based on supply and demand. While these fluctuations can impact the cost of electricity, we work closely with Minnkota to plan ahead and help stabilize electricity prices for our members.

**Extreme weather**

While we can't control the weather, we can review weather patterns and forecasts to prepare for times of extreme cold or heat, when we know the demand (20175 David Lubarski) for electricity will increase. But when temperatures become extremely cold and the demand for electricity spikes, the price of electricity can also increase.

**Infrastructure and equipment**

To cover the costs associated with providing electricity to your home or business, Red Lake Electric members pay a monthly facility charge. This flat monthly fee ensures the cost of equipment, materials, labor and daily operations are covered for all members in Red Lake Electric's service territory. To ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local grid, including power lines, substations and other essential equipment.

## Understanding factors that impact your energy bills

by Stephanie Johnson

**Energy policy and regulations**

Federal energy policies and regulations can have a profound impact on electricity costs. As energy generation (31975 McKenna Poulos) shifts to the use of more renewable sources and stricter regulations for traditional, always-available fuel sources, such as natural gas and coal plants, costly upgrades and technologies must be constructed and deployed. These additional costs are ultimately passed to consumers. U.S. power consumption is expected to double by 2050. Across the country, electric cooperatives are working with members of Congress to advocate for smart energy policies that reliably power our local communities.

**You have control**

While many of these external factors that impact electricity costs are out of our control, we all have the power to manage our energy use at home. The most effective way to lower use is thermostat management. Since heating and cooling account for a major portion of home energy use, adjusting the thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting can help you save energy and money. Remember to service your heating and cooling system annually and replace dirty filters as needed. You can also reduce energy use by taking advantage of off-peak periods, when the demand for electricity is lower. Reserve energy-intensive chores for off-peak times, such as early in the morning or later in the evening, to save energy. Be sure to seal air leaks around windows, doors and other areas where gaps are possible. This will help your heating and cooling system work less and improve the overall comfort of your home.

Red Lake Electric is your local energy partner, and we're here to help. Visit [redlakeelectric.com](http://redlakeelectric.com) to learn about our efficiency programs designed to help you save. As always, we will continue working diligently to provide you with reliable power at an affordable cost.

**New facilities**

We continue to have biweekly meetings with Michael J. Burns Architects to finalize floor plans and work with their engineers in the design of the HVAC and electrical systems. We are still on target to reach our goal of breaking ground sometime this spring. I understand that many are concerned about the cost of a new building. Please understand we are working closely with our architects to assure that the cost is within our budget, and we continue to work with our lenders to keep interest rates as low as possible. As always, you can always reach out if you have any questions.

# NERC: Nation's electric grid at elevated risk during extreme winter weather

Most regions across the United States are facing elevated risks of electricity supply shortfalls this winter, particularly during extreme weather events, according to a new report from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC). In its Winter Reliability Assessment released Nov. 14, NERC highlighted growing challenges to the nation's power grid as dispatchable generation sources — such as coal and natural gas power plants — are retired.

In the Upper Midwest's MISO region — where Red Lake Electric Cooperative and its power provider, Minnkota Power Cooperative, operate — the

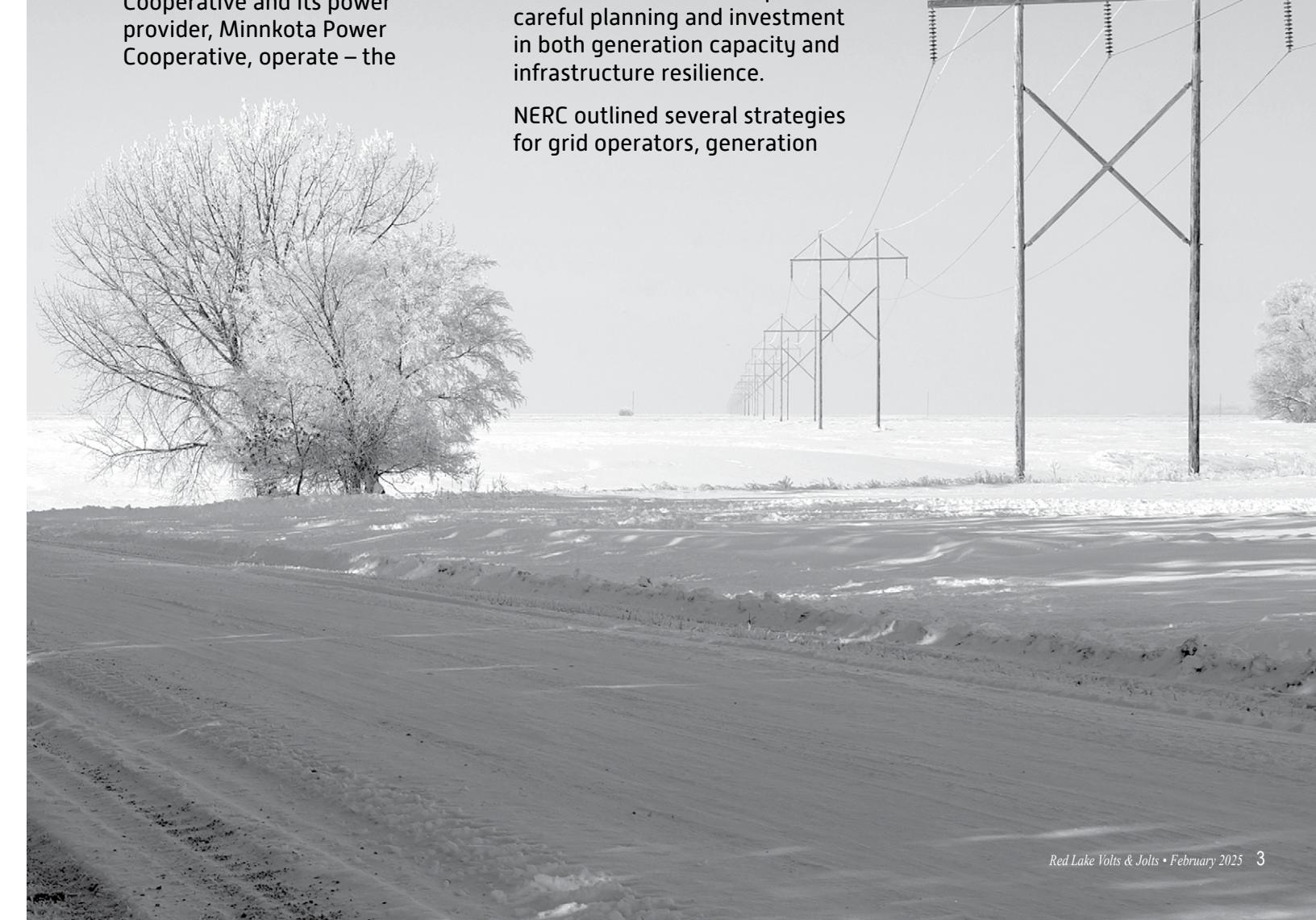
elevated risks are attributed to the retirement of 5 gigawatts of coal and natural gas generation since last winter.

"With fewer internal dispatchable resources and increasing reliance on wind and imports, the risk of supply shortfall in winter has increased in MISO," the NERC report concluded.

NERC's findings emphasize the growing vulnerability of the nation's electric grid amid the transition to lower-carbon but more variable power sources. As the grid evolves, ensuring reliability during periods of extreme weather will require careful planning and investment in both generation capacity and infrastructure resilience.

NERC outlined several strategies for grid operators, generation

owners and government authorities to prevent energy emergencies and reduce the risk of power outages. These recommendations include bolstering preparedness for periods (25685 Marian Olson) of high electricity demand and low wind output, winterizing generation units to ensure their reliability in extreme cold and enhancing operational coordination to secure adequate fuel supplies for power generation.



## YOU'RE A MEMBER OF SOMETHING BIGGER.

As a member-owner of Red Lake Electric Cooperative, you are a part of something great. You have a voice in how the cooperative works to keep the lights on. But you're not just part of your local electric cooperative – you are a part of a much larger system.

Minnkota Power Cooperative is your wholesale electric supplier owned by Red Lake Electric and 10 other distribution cooperatives in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota. The Grand Forks-based co-op generates all the energy required for the entire membership. Minnkota's Milton R. Young Station, located near Center, North Dakota, is the main source of coal generation (31716 Ryan Schultz) in the cooperative's diverse energy portfolio. Electricity for the region is also derived from wind and hydro allocations throughout North Dakota.

## WHAT MAKES THESE COOPERATIVES THE SAME?

### Same end goals

Minnkota and Red Lake Electric work with the same goals in mind – to safely deliver the most reliable, affordable electricity to every member. The cooperatives work together to build and maintain critical infrastructure, including substations and power lines.

### Shared values

Minnkota and Red Lake Electric share the same cooperative values, from cooperation among cooperatives to open and voluntary membership. These values drive the initiatives and community engagement at each location.

## HOW ARE THE COOPERATIVES DIFFERENT?

### Generation & Transmission vs. Distribution

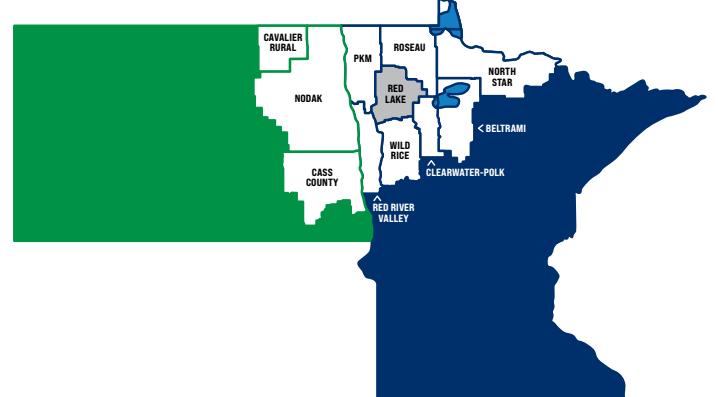
While both cooperatives focus on creating a reliable and robust electric system, our roles come in at different points in the process. Minnkota, a generation and transmission co-op, generates the electricity and sends it long distances to substations in our region. From there, distribution co-ops like Red Lake Electric send that power to individual homes and businesses in our community.

### Board of directors

Red Lake Electric's board of directors is made up of members like you! Minnkota's board is comprised (22748 Stacy Barnhart) of representatives from the boards of each of its member cooperatives within the system.

### Ownership

While YOU own Red Lake Electric, Minnkota is owned by 11 electric cooperatives. Together, they make decisions for the betterment of the entire membership and serve the needs of the larger electrical system.



Learn more about your wholesale energy supplier at [Minnkota.com](http://Minnkota.com)

## How does your power hold up to FREEZING TEMPERATURES?

*If you've lived through a few Upper Midwest winters, you know severe cold can wreak havoc on our everyday lives – vehicles won't start, water pipes freeze and frostbite nips at the unprepared. Red Lake Electric Cooperative, with the help of our power provider Minnkota Power Cooperative, makes sure freezing temperatures (23975 Timothy M Anderson) don't interrupt the reliable electric service you've come to expect. How do we stand up to the cold? Our method involves three parts:*

### Well-Protected Power Plant

Minnkota's Milton R. Young Station power plant near Center, North Dakota, is perfectly suited to withstand whatever winter throws at it. All the plant's major components are covered, insulated and weatherized to ensure they can operate in extreme cold. On top of that, there are employees onsite 24/7 to make sure systems are running smoothly through any extreme weather.

### Generation Resource Diversity

When it comes to reliable electricity, having a diverse generation portfolio is key – especially in the cold winter months. The electricity we purchase from Minnkota comes from coal, wind and hydro. If wind turbines ice up and stop producing, we still have access to a coal-based power plant and a hydroelectric dam. If the dam is affected by ice jams, wind and coal are still ready to work. We always have several players in the game.

### Demand Response Program

During cold snaps, demand for electricity is at its highest. If demand in our region is set to be higher than Minnkota's generation can adequately cover, Minnkota can purchase more energy from the national grid. However, those purchases can be expensive, and during a nationwide winter event, even national resources can be strained. To protect the reliability of the grid and save its members money, Minnkota can deploy its demand response program, which automatically switches participants from electric heat to a backup source, like fuel oil or propane. To see how you can participate and save money on your winter heating bill, visit [redlakeelectric.com](http://redlakeelectric.com).

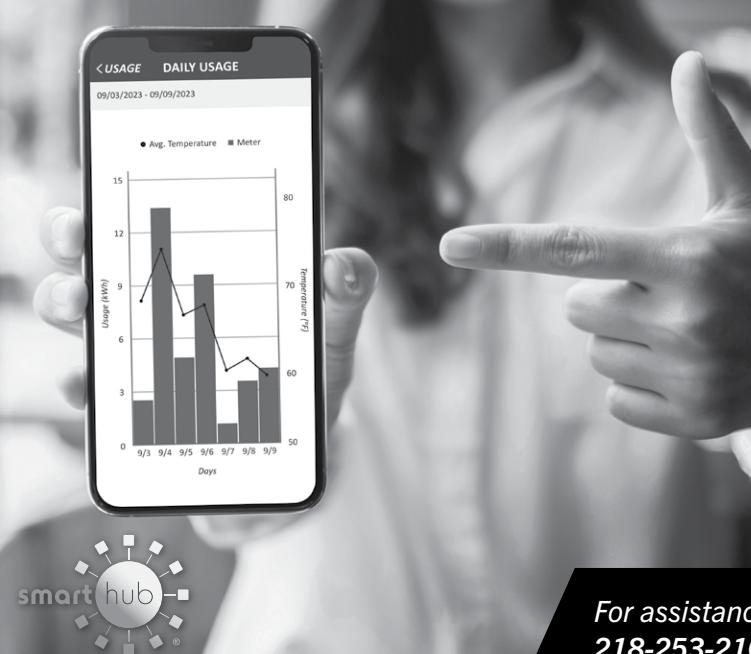
# HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS... WIN A WEEK IN WASHINGTON, D.C.!

June 16-21, 2025

## THE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR

Applicant's parent or guardian must be a member of Red Lake Electric Cooperative.  
Learn more at [redlakeelectric.com/member-services/youth-tour](http://redlakeelectric.com/member-services/youth-tour)

## 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)

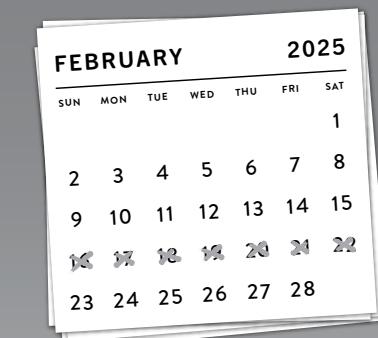
For assistance, call us during regular business hours at  
218-253-2168 or send an email to [info@redlakeelectric.com](mailto:info@redlakeelectric.com).

APPLICATION  
DEADLINE:  
**Feb. 21, 2025**



- Visit historic monuments and museums
- Build lifelong friendships
- Boost your community service and engagement
- Meet with your U.S. representatives and senators

## Did you know?



**\$ FOR A WEEK OF  
ELECTRICITY** = **\$ FOR A  
HEAVY-DUTY  
SWEATSHIRT**



\*comparison based on average household energy usage

## 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.

## TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Be cautious of fraudulent websites pretending to be an electric utility. Scammers often create look-alike sites to steal your personal or payment information. Always type your utility's official web address directly into your browser instead of clicking email or text links. Watch for signs of a secure website, such as "https://" in the address bar and a padlock icon. If you're ever unsure, call your utility company using the official phone number listed on your bill to verify payment or account details. Stay vigilant to protect yourself from utility fraud.



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.

## Smoked Sausage & Beer Cheese Potato Soup

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb smoked sausage
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 6 russet potatoes, peeled and cut in 1" cubes (about 5 cups)
- 1½ lbs Velveeta, cut into ½" cubes
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- ½ cup beer
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- Chopped fresh parsley

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Dice sausage, onions and celery.
2. Melt butter in a large pot (prefer a dutch oven) and sauté onions, celery and sausage for 5 minutes over medium high heat.
3. Add chicken broth and potatoes.
4. Bring to a boil.
5. Reduce heat to medium then cook for 12 minutes.
6. Mash potatoes slightly (2726 Diane Killian) with a potato masher.
7. Add milk, cream, beer, Velveeta and black pepper.
8. Continue cooking for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the Velveeta is completely melted and soup is heated through and potatoes are tender to your liking.
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9. Garnish with parsley and enjoy!

## ELECTRIC WATER HEATER + OFF-PEAK = SAVINGS

If a new water heater is in your future, we have a money-saving tip for you: **GO OFF-PEAK ELECTRIC.** When you set up your water heater on Red Lake Electric's off-peak program, it will draw electric heat during low-demand times of day, like overnight. That water stays hot all day long in a specially insulated tank, and you get a low off-peak electric rate – nearly half off the standard rate! Plus, we'll give you a rebate on your water heater, up to **\$500\***!

ELECTRIC WATER HEATER	REBATE	MUST BE ON OFF-PEAK
55 gallons or smaller	\$150/unit	X
56-99 gallons	\$400/unit	X
100 gallons or larger	\$500/unit	X

– Additional \$100 for new building construction  
– Additional \$250 available for conversion from existing natural gas or propane to electric water heater

\* Visit our website for rebate eligibility guidelines and limits.

Give your local contractor a call to learn more about available electric water heater models. If you have questions about the off-peak program, contact Red Lake Electric or visit [valueofelectricity.com](http://valueofelectricity.com)!