

# 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

**DL EC**  
**RLEC**

APRIL 2024



## 86<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

See page 4 for details







# 86<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Recap

The 86<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of Red Lake Electric Cooperative was held March 27 at the Legacy Event Center in Thief River Falls. The meeting was attended by approximately 150 cooperative members and guests.

President Stacy Blawat called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. The meeting was opened with the saying of the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the invocation by Colette Kujava, and introduction of the board of directors and special guest by board president Stacy Blawat.

The meeting agenda included: approval of 2023 annual meeting minutes by secretary/treasurer

Mark Hanson; the president's report and election of directors by Stacy Blawat; and the general manager's and financial report by Stephanie Johnson.

Matt Marshal, Member Services, Rates & Economic Development Manager for Minnkota Power Cooperative in Grand Forks, N.D., discussed why it's important for cooperative members to be involved, and the positive impacts this can have on communities.

Annually employees and directors are recognized when surpassing five-year increments of service. This year, those recognized included: Melanie LaCrosse, Member Accounts

Specialist, and Brett Knott, Lead Lineman, 15 years; Darcy Cardinal, Journeyman Lineworker, and Branden Narlock, 10 years; Stephanie Johnson, General Manager, and Cecil Anderson, District 8 Board Director, 5 years.

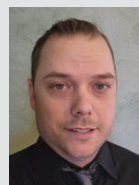
Door prizes were awarded, and a sit-down meal was provided. The meal was catered by David Lee Catering of Thief River Falls.

Congratulations to our reelected director, Cecil Anderson, and newly elected director Lars Dyrud and Krist Olson, as they were elected at the annual meeting; they will each serve three-year terms.

## Directors Elected to Red Lake Electric's Board



**Lars Dyrud**  
District 2



**Krist Olson**  
District 7



**Cecil Anderson**  
District 8



Pennington County Teens Toward Zero Deaths receives Operation Round Up funds.



Members get registered for the meeting.



Meeting attendees enjoy a meal catered by David Lee Catering.

## Winners of Door Prizes:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| • <b>\$300 Energy Credit</b><br>Warren Hermreck  | • <b>\$75 Energy Credit</b><br>Dennis Wawrzyniak | • <b>Milwaukee Radio</b><br>Roger Love      |
| • <b>\$150 Energy Credit</b><br>Gary B. Anderson | • <b>\$75 Energy Credit</b><br>Dale Bentow       | • <b>Air Fryer</b><br>Rudolph Applequist    |
| • <b>\$100 Energy Credit</b><br>Darwin Eidelbes  | • <b>\$75 Energy Credit</b><br>Alan Swanson      | • <b>Lock 'N Go Grill</b><br>Lona Trochmann |

# It's National Safe Digging Month



# CAN YOU DIG IT?

Before you start planning any outdoor projects this spring, don't forget to **CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!**

The month of April is dedicated to spreading awareness of the importance of calling 8-1-1, the national call-before-you-dig number, before beginning any new outdoor project at your home or business. You never know what buried lines, cables or pipes (30643 Jason B. Nupdal) are hidden underneath your property. To protect yourself from serious injury or costly repairs, call 8-1-1 two to three days before your shovel is scheduled to break ground.

## When should I call 8-1-1?

When putting in a mailbox  
**CALL 8-1-1**



When planting a garden  
**CALL 8-1-1**



When building a deck  
**CALL 8-1-1**



When adding a fence  
**CALL 8-1-1**



**Keep your family, friends and neighborhood safe by remembering these five easy steps to ensure safe digging.**

### 1 NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or submit a request online two to three days before you start. The utilities affected by your digging will be notified of your project.



### 2 WAIT

Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.



### 3 CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



### 4 RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for the duration of your project.



### 5 DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project.



Ready to begin your next backyard addition? Visit **call811.com** or scan this code to get started on your safe digging online request form today!





# GRID REGULATORS ISSUE WARNINGS ABOUT POWER RELIABILITY

Red Lake Electric Cooperative is connected to a regional grid that is facing a high to extreme risk of reliability issues in the next five years, according to assessments from leading grid regulators.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) – the entity responsible for developing and enforcing mandatory reliability standards for utilities in the United States and Canada – released its Long-Term Reliability Assessment in December 2023. The report found that rising peak demand for electricity and the planned retirement of 83,000 megawatts (MW) of fossil fuel and nuclear generation over the next 10 years creates blackout risks for most of the United States.

The highest risk level is in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) region, which covers 15 states including Minnesota and the eastern Dakotas through the central U.S. to Louisiana. Challenges throughout other parts of the U.S. can and do impact operations at Red Lake Electric Cooperative due to the interconnected nature of the grid. Although this region plans to add 12,000 MW of new resources in the next five years, the retirement of power plants is expected to leave the region with a shortfall of 4,700 MW by 2028.

The top recommendation from NERC in the report is for the addition of new

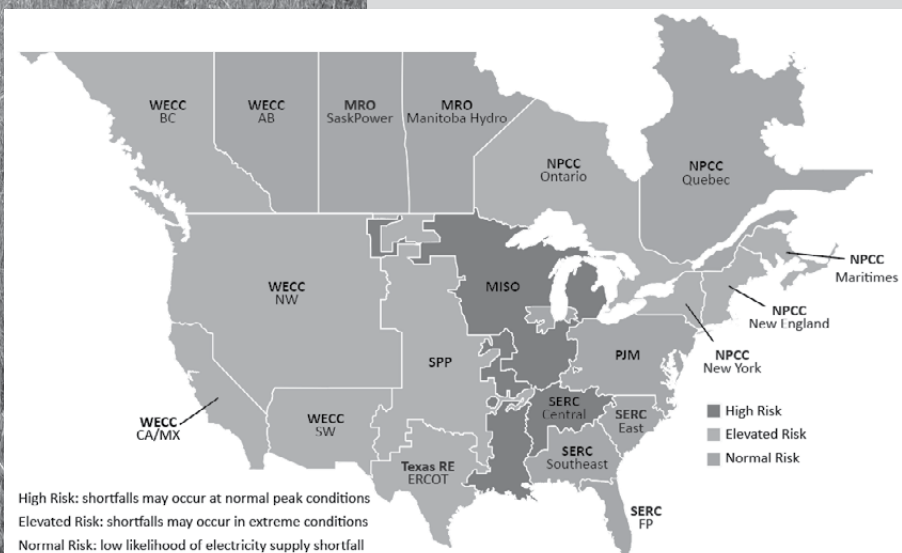
resources with needed reliability attributes and to make existing resources more dependable. Additionally, NERC said, “New wind and solar resources use inverters to convert their output power onto the grid, and the vast majority of resource inverters are susceptible to tripping or power disruption during normal grid fault conditions; this makes the future grid less reliable when more resources are inverter-based.”

Other important recommendations include the expansion of power transmission infrastructure, updates to wholesale energy market designs and strengthened relationships among reliability stakeholders and policy-makers. The Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO) came to a similar conclusion about the dire state of grid reliability when it released its 2024 Regional Risk Assessment in February. For the first time in its history, MRO identified an extreme risk – uncertain energy availability.

The report identified that “conventional, baseload generation that is available on demand is being retired and replaced with resources with limited energy availability due to uncertain fuel supplies that are increasingly weather dependent.” Additionally, the report found that “new generation resources are largely inverter-based and perform much differently than conventional resources, reducing essential reliability services to the grid and requiring new modeling assumptions.”

MRO is one of six regional entities operating underneath NERC to ensure the reliability of the bulk electric system through the enforcement of reliability standards.

“Reliability needs to stay at the forefront of people’s minds as the policy framework is being defined,” said Mac McLennan, Minnesota president and CEO. “It’s unacceptable for the people of our region to wake up in the morning and not know if they’re going to have dependable electric service. Our country is accelerating down a path where this could become our reality. We need to approach this transformation of America’s electric grid with caution and common sense. There’s simply too much at stake.”



## HOW DOES CARBON STORAGE WORK?

You’ve likely heard about Project Tundra, a carbon capture and storage initiative being pursued by our wholesale power supplier, Minnkota Power Cooperative, and its partners. If successful, this technology would capture approximately 4 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) every year and store it safely and permanently underground – creating a more sustainable power mix for Red Lake Electric Cooperative.

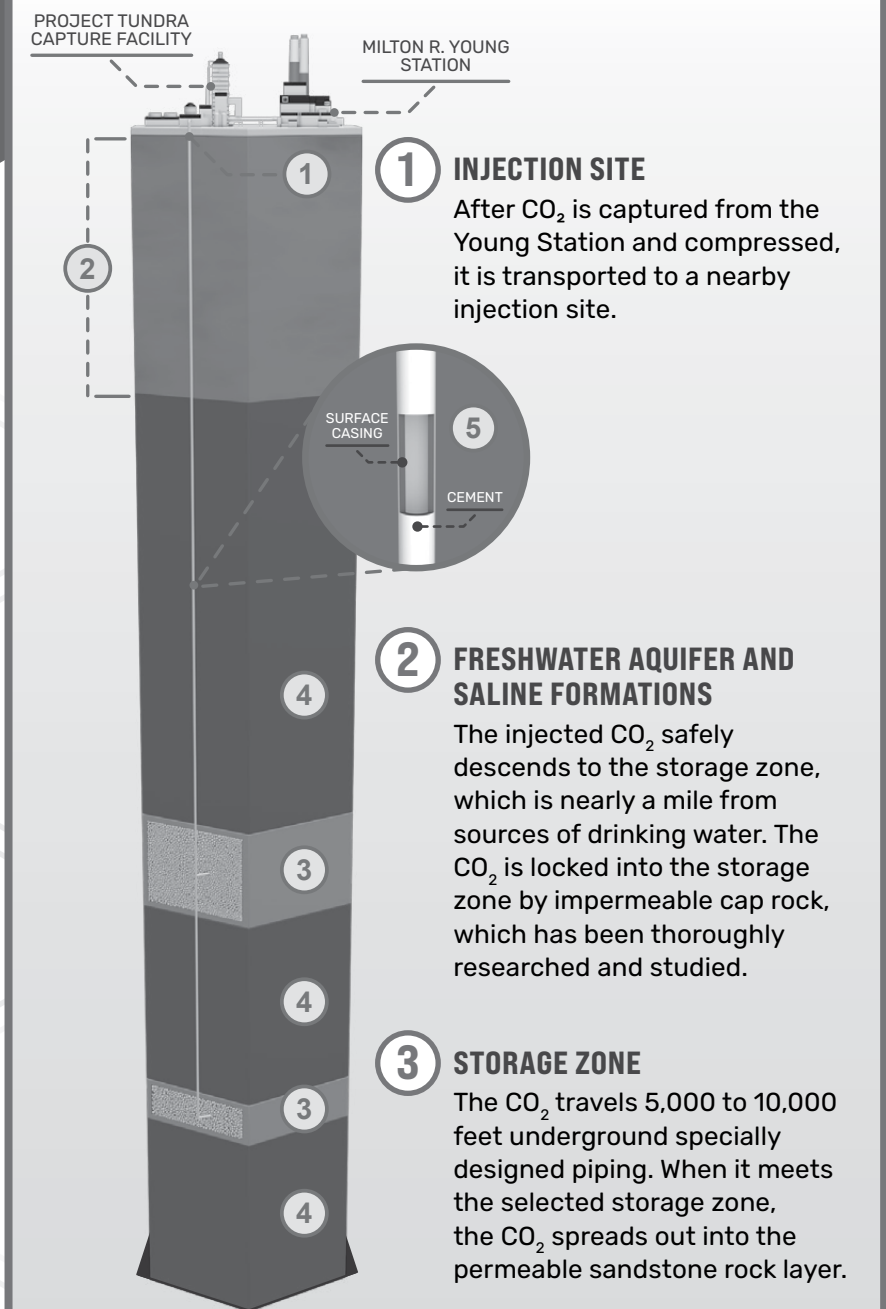
So how does the “storage” portion of this process work? It’s quite simple...



WATCH THE  
STORAGE  
PROCESS



LEARN MORE  
ABOUT PROJECT  
TUNDRA



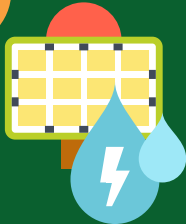
# CELEBRATING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP THIS EARTH DAY

*Rural electric cooperatives love Earth Day. That's because, on April 22, we get to celebrate a few of the amazing resources and programs we offer to help preserve our region and our planet. With environmental stewardship at the heart of our values, Red Lake Electric Cooperative and our power provider, Minnkota Power Cooperative, want to share a few of the many ways we work to keep the air, water and land of the region exceptional.*

## Responsible generation

Minnkota's generation portfolio leverages an all-of-the-above energy strategy – they rely on a diverse mix of energy resources to meet the demands of our region. Currently, 41% of your power comes from carbon-free resources like wind and hydro. Additionally, Minnkota and its partners are pursuing a carbon capture initiative called Project Tundra at the coal-based Young Station near Center, N.D. If the project moves forward, roughly 4 million tons of carbon dioxide will be safely captured and stored every year.

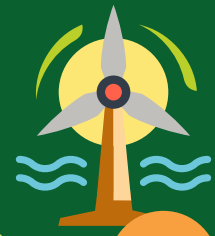
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## Infinity Renewable Energy Program

Many of Red Lake Electric Cooperative's members are interested in being powered by renewable generation resources. The Infinity Renewable Energy program allows homes (30406 Richard Battles) and businesses to enroll and choose the kilowatt-hours or percentage of their electricity they would like to come from renewable resources. Call today and learn more about how you can get signed up!

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## Electrification efforts & incentives

Members who are "going electric" are not only saving more on their energy bill but also limiting use of gas, propane and fuel oil. Red Lake Electric Cooperative offers rebates and incentives on electric technologies like water heaters, electric vehicle chargers and heat pumps that are not only energy efficient, but also environmentally conscious. Check out [ValueofElectricity.com](http://ValueofElectricity.com) to learn more!



## Wildlife & vegetation protection

Living in this region offers the privilege of enjoying its diverse wildlife and vegetation. When it's time to plan new power projects, your cooperative takes into consideration how it may impact the current environment.

We prioritize considerations for environmentally delicate zones (27712 Brian D. Hoiseth) and bird migratory routes when planning new power line routes. Additionally, we deploy innovative technologies to keep birds from perching on power poles and preventing other creatures from climbing them.

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