

# 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

**RLEC**  
JULY/AUGUST 2024

## CO-OPS THEIR COMMUNITIES

We love being a part of the community. The employees at Red Lake Electric Cooperative live, work and play in the same neighborhoods as the members we serve – creating deep and lasting ties to the community. That's why we feel a great responsibility to provide our friends and neighbors with the most reliable and affordable power possible.

A driving principle for a cooperative (Gerda Koskela 24507) is its concern for the community. Check out all the ways Red Lake Electric Cooperative is caring for you – the members of the cooperative family.

1

### COMMITTED TO AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE ENERGY

Every decision and plan we make is to keep the electricity you use every day affordable and available 24/7. As a not-for-profit, our goal is reliability – not profits. With a board of directors made up of our membership, we can ensure our business operates according to the needs of the membership.



2

### LEADERS IN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

More than 40% of our energy generation capacity comes from carbon-free resources like wind and hydro, but that's just the start. Members also have the option (Skyler Bergeson 31248) to enroll in the Infinity Renewable Energy program to add even more wind to their power mix.



3

### HELP WITH SAVINGS AND EFFICIENCY

Our team loves to save members money! If you set up an electric water heater, heat pump or even an EV charger on our voluntary off-peak program – which offers nearly half the standard electric rate – you will see major savings each month. We also offer rebates to help with the installation of new electric technology. And if you need advice on how to lower your monthly bill, we are always happy to take your call!

Learn more about how your local energy cooperative cares for its community at [redlakeelectric.com](http://redlakeelectric.com).

4

### GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITIES

A big part of the cooperative way of life is giving back to the members we serve. Besides returning end-of-year margins to our members as capital credits, Red Lake Electric also awards scholarships to local high school seniors, sponsors youth trips to Washington, D.C., conducts safety demonstrations for all ages and so much more! Red Lake Electric also participates in Operation Round Up®, through which members can voluntarily round up their electric bills, with the additional funds distributed to local charity organizations.

For more on Operation Round Up and how to apply for a donation, visit [redlakeelectric.com/member-services/operation-round-up](http://redlakeelectric.com/member-services/operation-round-up).

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**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.

# LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

by Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA)

The 2024 legislative session adjourned in complete chaos at midnight on Sunday, May 19. Democrats, who control the House, Senate and Governor's office, rushed to pass their legislative agenda before the constitutional deadline over Republican objections.

For cooperative member-owners, the session was mostly a success with no new costly mandates, the passage of a bipartisan permitting reform bill and an expansion of scholarship eligibility for students interested in an energy career. Nonetheless, the inability of the legislature to agree on a tax bill that includes commonsense property tax relief for cooperative member-owners remains a disappointment.

(MREA), the statewide association representing electric cooperative member-owners, was ensuring no new mandates were imposed on electric cooperatives this session. Several bills, including distributed generation mandates, interconnection mandates and a cooperative governance mandate, were introduced or carried over from last year. However, none of these bills moved forward or passed thanks in part to MREA's work and the work of member-owners advocating for their cooperatives. Cooperatives are governed by the members they serve, and heavy-handed government mandates only work to raise costs, undermine local democracy and add layers of unhelpful bureaucracy. We are grateful to legislators in both parties who stood up and said "no" to additional mandates.

## Minnesota Energy Infrastructure Permitting Act

The Minnesota Energy Infrastructure Permitting Act was a bipartisan clean energy permitting reform package that incorporated various ideas with widespread support from energy stakeholders. The package will make the electric sector permitting faster and more cost-effective. This bill was a high priority for many stakeholders, especially clean energy advocates, who consider permitting reform critical to building the wind and solar generation and transmission infrastructure needed to achieve carbon-free energy by 2040. The legislation should help save member-owners money while accelerating the construction of necessary infrastructure to improve reliability during the transition to cleaner energy.

## No New Mandates

One of the top priorities of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association

scholarship and grant opportunities, and does not have an income limit. Because other types of state aid go only to low-income students and max out before paying for the full cost of attendance, this scholarship can often close the gap between a student's full cost and other aid.

Cooperatives can now work with their local Minnesota state schools to set up a matching scholarship for students who choose to study an energy-related field. The law sets aside 10% of the funding for this program every year to increase awards at colleges that successfully develop local business partnerships and receive matching scholarship dollars from those businesses. This program is a great opportunity to develop our future workforce while helping local students afford college.

## Workforce Development Scholarships

MREA's proposal to add "energy" to the list of industries eligible for workforce development scholarships at Minnesota state colleges and universities passed as part of the final Higher Education bill and could mean more aid to students looking to join our industry.

The Workforce Development Scholarship Program provides aid of \$2,500 per academic year (\$1,250 per semester) for students enrolled in programs in nine select industries and is now available to those in lineworker education. This program is available at all Minnesota state schools but is geared toward full-time, two-year associate degree programs. It is especially valuable to students because it has more expansive uses than other forms of financial aid, is provided in addition to other

a priority for cooperatives across the state and will hopefully pass next session. In the meantime, the MREA is working with the Minnesota Department of Revenue to help alleviate the problem until a permanent solution is signed into law.

## Conclusion

Despite the challenges and last-minute chaos, the 2024 legislative session brought several positive outcomes for Minnesota's electric cooperative member-owners. The passage of crucial permitting reforms, the prevention of new costly mandates and the expansion of workforce development scholarships are significant wins. However, the lack of progress on property tax relief remains a key issue that we will continue (Richard J Murphy 30808) to address in future sessions.

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association, alongside member cooperatives, remains committed to advocating for policies that support the affordability, reliability and sustainability of our energy infrastructure. As we move forward, we will keep working tirelessly to ensure that the voices of cooperative members are heard and their needs met. To help lend your voice in support of cooperative values, you can sign up for alerts at <https://voicesforcooperativepower.com>.

## 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.



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.

## Big Mac Salad

**INGREDIENTS****Sauce/Dressing**

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp. finely diced sweet onion
- 2 tbsp. ketchup
- 1 tsp. prepared yellow mustard
- 1 tbsp. sweet pickle relish
- 1 tsp. white vinegar (or lemon juice)
- 1/4 tsp. sweet paprika
- 1/8 tsp. kosher salt

**Salad**

- Nonstick spray
- 1 lb. lean ground beef
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 6 cups shredded iceberg lettuce
- 1/2 cup finely diced onions
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup finely diced dill pickles
- Toasted sesame seeds, for garnish

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Make the dressing: Whisk all the dressing ingredients together. (If it's too thick to drizzle, you can thin it out with just a bit of water.) Set aside while you cook the beef (or cover and refrigerate if using later).
2. Cook the beef: Warm a large nonstick pan over medium-high heat. Once hot, spray with nonstick spray and add the ground beef. Cook, undisturbed for 1 minute, so it can develop a nice brown color. Then sauté, breaking it up into tiny crumbles, until cooked through (Kenton Kainz 27920) and no pink remains. Drain off the fat, then season with the salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Transfer beef to a shallow bowl to cool slightly.
3. Assemble the salad: In rows, divide the lettuce between 4 salad bowls (about 1 1/2 cups each.) Top with about 1/3 cup beef, the cheddar cheese, diced onion, and pickles. Drizzle about 3 tablespoons of the Big Mac sauce over each salad and toss to coat. Garnish with a little bit of toasted sesame seeds and enjoy.

# SCHOLARSHIPS

## 2024 RECIPIENTS

Each year, Red Lake Electric Cooperative provides scholarships for graduating seniors at each of the high schools operating throughout the cooperative's service area. The recipients are selected by the scholarship selection committee of the recipients' high schools. There were 18 recipients this year with each student receiving \$500. The funds for these scholarships come from unclaimed capital credits. Congratulations and best wishes to these scholarship recipients!



**Mya Bregier**  
*Lincoln High School*  
Jason & Cori Bregier



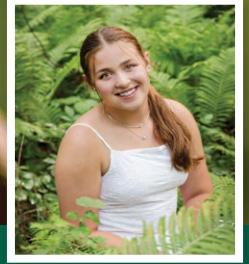
**Brooklyn Brummund**  
*Lafayette High School*  
Susan Brummund & Derek Brummund



**Katelyn Christensen**  
*Crookston High School*  
Brian & Jessica Christensen



**Molly Cullen**  
*Grygla-Gatzke High School*  
Sarah Madison



**Nadia Delorme**  
*Lafayette High School*  
Tom & Lisa Delorme



**Jamie Flatgard**  
*Red Lake County Central High School*  
Craig & Shelly Flatgard



**Gretta Gradzielewski**  
*Lincoln High School*  
Alan & Amanda Gradzielewski



**Tessa Hoglo**  
*Marshall County Central High School*  
Troy & Sara Hoglo



**Braya Johnson**  
*Lincoln High School*  
Brent & Brenda Johnson



**Emma Johnson**  
*Warren Alvarado Olso School*  
Mark & Jane Johnson



**Emilea Johnson**  
*Goodridge High School*  
Brian & Tracy Johnson



**Jennifer Johnson**  
*Red Lake County Central High School*  
Jeremiah Johnson & Catherine Johnson



**Carter Lee Johnsrud**  
*Goodridge High School*  
Clifton & Jena Johnsrud



**Caden Marquis**  
*Goodridge High School*  
David & Lori Marquis



**Ella Moen**  
*Red Lake County Central High School*  
Jason & Shannon Moen



**Isabelle Morniville**  
*Win-E-Mac High School*  
Craig Morniville & Alysia Schmitz



**Brynn Olson**  
*Lincoln High School*  
Terry & Stacy Olson



**Brooke Tofstad**  
*Win-E-Mac High School*  
Ben & Kristi Tofstad

## UNCLAIMED CAPITAL CREDITS

The following people have refunds due to them. Checks mailed to their last-known address have been returned by the Postal Service. These former members may contact Red Lake Electric by calling the office at 218-253-2168 or 800-245-6068 or via email at [info@redlakeelectric.com](mailto:info@redlakeelectric.com)

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DUMMER, RICHARD L.	IMLE, PAUL	IMLE, PAUL	SATHER, KYLE	YOUNGMAN, PAUL
DURBIN, PAUL	IVERSON, CHERYL	IVERSON, CHERYL	SAVE OUR SOULS EQUINE RESCUE	ZORNES, WAYNE
DURHEIM, MONA R.			SCHAFER, JOSEPH	

## NEW RATE INCREASE

Effective September 2024 (October 2024 Bill)

As a not-for-profit organization, it is necessary for Red Lake Electric Cooperative (Frank Ehling 24658) to recover the costs of doing business, as well as maintain enough margins to reinvest in the system for reliability and cover repayment of debt. This practice ensures long-term financial stability for the cooperative. Red Lake Electric Cooperative staff have found that rising costs of services, materials and interest rates continue to have a significant impact on the essential things we need to supply reliable power to our members.

Since 2020, we have seen the following price increases in materials:

- Underground Transformers: **300%**
- Overhead Transformers: **175%**
- Digger Truck (Line Truck): **150%**
- Cable/Conductor: **70% - 130%**
- Poles: **130%**
- Ground Rods: **200%**
- Cross Arms: **40% - 50%**
- Hardware (Bolts, Washers, Etc.): **60% - 90%**

With all the financial pressure to consider, your board of directors has had to act on a rate increase recommendation (Eric J Sirek 30710) put forth by the staff. A member with a residential service (Rate 1) will see roughly an \$8.00 to \$11.00 monthly increase on their electric bill.

**This increase will take effect for September's usage that will be billed in October.**

Rate 1, General Service	Current Rate	New Rate
Monthly Facilities Charge		
1.5 - 25 kVA Transformer	\$40.00/\$43.00	<b>\$45.00</b>
26 - 75 kVA Transformer	\$48.00	<b>\$50.00</b>
All Kilowatt-Hours	\$0.110	<b>\$0.115</b>
Multiphase Surcharge	\$22.00	<b>\$25.00</b>

Rate 2, On-Peak Service, over 75 kVA Transformer	Current Rate	New Rate
Monthly Facilities Charge	\$64.00	<b>\$66.00</b>
All Kilowatt-Hours	\$0.068	<b>\$0.070</b>
Demand Charge per kW (Dec-Feb)	\$16.00	<b>No Change</b>
Demand Charge per kW (Mar-Nov)	\$11.00	<b>\$12.00</b>

Rate 3, Seasonal Service, over 75 kVA Transformer	Current Rate	New Rate
Monthly Facilities Charge	\$0.70	<b>\$1.00</b>
All Kilowatt-Hours	\$0.110	<b>\$0.115</b>
Multiphase Surcharge	\$22.00	<b>\$25.00</b>

Rate 4, Interruptible Service, over 75 kVA Transformer	Current Rate	New Rate
Monthly Facilities Charge	\$64.00	<b>\$66.00</b>
All Kilowatt-Hours	\$0.068	<b>\$0.070</b>
Multiphase Surcharge	\$22.00	<b>\$25.00</b>

	Monthly GAC per kW		
	First 3.5 kW	kW in Excess of 3.5 kW	Not-to-Exceed
Residential (<10 kVA)	<b>No Charge</b>	\$2.60	\$2.26
Residential (11-25 kVA)	<b>No Charge</b>	\$2.60	\$2.26
Residential (26-75 kVA)	<b>No Charge</b>	\$2.05	\$1.9



## OPERATION ROUND UP® GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE

**FRIDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 20**

Organizations involved in community projects and charities are encouraged to apply for funds from Operation Round Up at this time. Completed grant applications are due in the Red Lake Electric Cooperative (RLEC) office by Friday,

**September 20, 2024.**

Operation Round Up is a program adopted by RLEC, headquartered in Red Lake Falls. Members choosing to "round up" their monthly electric bill payment provide funds for this effort. Today, 98% of RLEC members now choose to contribute pennies each month to enhance their communities.

Funds will be donated primarily to nonprofit organizations to help fund specific projects or programs. Since the program began in 1993, \$672,421 has been granted to community organizations and charities. Money is donated (Eliesha Owens 28835) for the betterment of the community within the outside service area boundaries of RLEC.

The Red Lake Electric Trust Board of Directors determines grants. Board members are Stacy Bierman, Thief River Falls; Pamela Vettleson, Plummer; Laura Kasprowicz, Thief River Falls; Stephanie Johnson, Gatzke; and Bonnie Christians, Crookston.

To apply for Operation Round Up grant, organizations should contact the RLEC office in Red Lake Falls at 218-253-2168 or 800-245-6068. A short application must be completed and submitted along with a financial statement from the organization.

Grant application forms are available on the cooperative's website: [redlakeelectric.com](http://redlakeelectric.com)

For more information, contact Stephanie Johnson, General Manager of RLEC, at **218-253-2168** or **800-245-6068**.

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