

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
SEPTEMBER 2024

EAT, DRINK AND BE MARRIED AT COPPER RIDGE

Learn more on page 4.



Published 10 times a year, January through May, July and September through December, by Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc., in the interest of its members and others. Periodical postage paid at the U.S. Post Office in Red Lake Falls, Minnesota 56750. POSTMASTER, SEND ADDRESS CHANGES to Volts & Jolts, c/o Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 430, Red Lake Falls, Minnesota 56750-0430. Email: info@redlakeelectric.com.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President Peter Mosbeck
Vice President Bonnie Christians
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Jennifer Benier-Linder, Randy Versdahl,
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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
Email: 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 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.

**New Red Lake Electric
facility on the horizon**

by Stephanie Johnson

For the past year and a half, the Red Lake Electric staff along with the board of directors have evaluated different opportunities with our existing cooperative facility. The original cooperative headquarters was built in 1942. While additions and upgrades have worked for many years, changes in fleet vehicles, equipment, operation efficiencies, and structural concerns made it necessary for us to explore renovation (20379 Charles H Walton) of our existing facility versus a new facility. It was decided to hire Michael J. Burns Architects to complete a study comparing remodeling options versus building new.

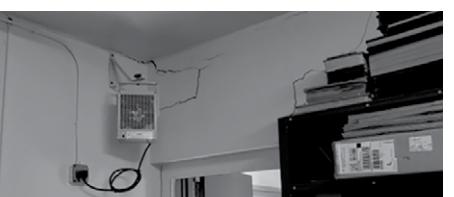
After close evaluation of not only the cost to renovate our existing building, but also the disruptions a major renovation would cause to our ongoing daily operations, the board

of directors has decided that the longevity and efficiency of a new facility, to be built on property owned by Red Lake Electric located west of our pole yard, would best serve Red Lake Electric Cooperative long into the future.

Our next steps will be to work closely with Michael J. Burns Architects to ensure a new facility will be efficient, cost-effective and serve not only our employees, but also our members (26711 Sidney V Finseth) for many years to come.

As we proceed with this process, we will be adding information to our website that will include pictures of the current issues with our existing facilities (a few shown below), frequently asked questions and continued updates as they become available.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me; I will be happy to speak with you.



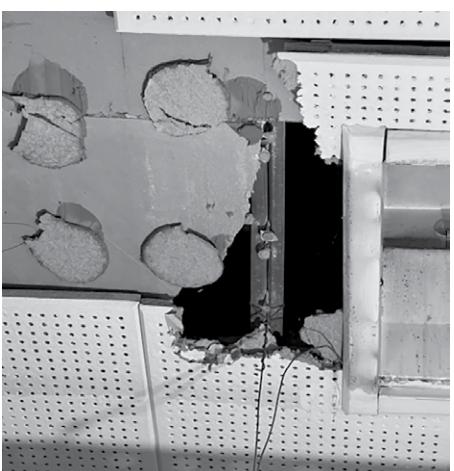
Wall cracks



Office floor condition, floor slope



Cracked brick on inside wall of truck garage



Condition above ceiling tile



Cracked ceiling

PLANTING KNOWLEDGE FOR A SAFE HARVEST

Harvest is one of the busiest times of the year for our region's farmers. From late nights to early mornings, the dedication they show to the land is unmatched. The team at Red Lake Electric wants to remind farmers that the best thing (31106 Geraldine Sutliff) they can do is to come home safely at the end of the day. Here are some safety tips that will help keep our growers safe this harvest.

STAY SAFE AROUND POWER LINES

**KEEP YOUR EQUIPMENT
AWAY FROM POWER LINES**

Keep your equipment (and yourself) at least 10 feet away from power lines in all directions. Use a spotter when moving tall equipment and loads near power lines.

**LOWER YOUR EQUIPMENT
BEFORE MOVING**

Always lower your equipment to the lowest possible setting before moving it. Wind and uneven ground may cause extended equipment to make contact with power lines.

**REPORT ANY CONTACT
WITH LINES RIGHT AWAY**

If your equipment ever comes in contact with a power line, do not get out and examine it. Call 9-1-1 and wait until the line has been de-energized.

GENERAL HARVEST SAFETY TIPS

**STAY ALERT AND
FOCUSED AT WORK**

Harvest can be very demanding. The long days can make getting quality (20849 David Bakke) rest difficult. Taking breaks and getting proper rest is crucial for avoiding mistakes and can prevent accidents caused by fatigue.

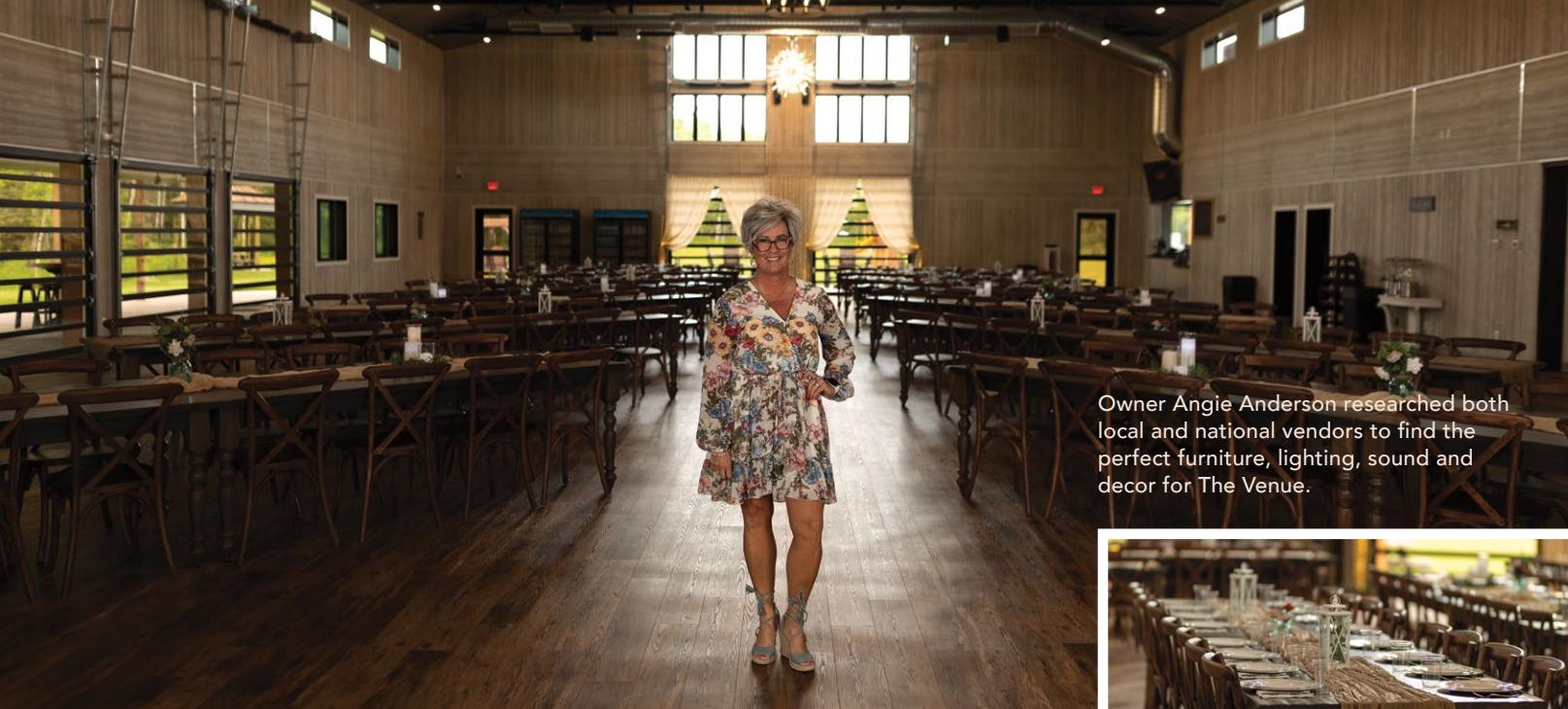
**INSPECT EQUIPMENT
BEFORE USE**

Regular inspection of your equipment can save time, money and lives during harvest season. Identifying issues or potential problems can help you be more efficient while also operating your equipment safely.

**WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHING AND
GEAR TO PREVENT SERIOUS INJURY**

Loose-fitting clothing can get caught in farming machinery and cause serious injury. Wearing close-fitting clothing – in addition to items such as hats, gloves and safety glasses – can prevent injury and exposure to harmful elements while harvesting.





EAT, DRINK AND BE MARRIED AT COPPER RIDGE

Newest Red Lake Electric Cooperative member business offers rural elegance for life's big events

By Kaylee Cusack // Photography Michael Hoeft

For the past decade or so, Angie Anderson has heard a whisper of a calling. It grew louder as her children got older, found love and started planning their nuptials. More recently, she started seeing it: an expansive space near her husband Rob's hometown of Newfolden, Minn., filled with hundreds of people celebrating under one gleaming copper roof.

"I've always wanted to have a wedding venue. I love venues, I love weddings, I love organizing events and helping people with things," Angie said. "Our daughter got married in 2022, and after that wedding, at a venue, we both looked at each other and said, 'I think we could do this.'"

Once they said "I do" to the idea, the Andersons broke ground in 2023 for The Venue at Copper Ridge, a modern rustic wedding and events center nestled on 26 wooded acres north of Thief River Falls, Minn. The development was a successful marriage of Angie's attention to detail and Rob's skills as a building contractor. With the help of family, friends and many local building specialists, The Venue opened its doors this spring, hosting its first wedding on June 1.

The Venue boasts beautifully furnished bridal and groom's suites, two stocked bars, a full commercial catering kitchen, handcrafted wooden tables, a bridal cabin, ample patio space and

an outdoor, silo-inspired ceremony site. Angie thought of everything, from a playground set for entertaining the kids to one-way-mirrored overhead doors to expand the party to the outdoors. But she channeled most of her focus into two things that can make or break a great celebration – room for up to 400 guests and a sound system that hits every nook of the event site.

"A big thing for me is sound. At a wedding, I hate it when you can't hear anything," she said, explaining that The Venue's professionally installed speakers and perforated tin ceiling create an echo-free audio experience. "The speakers are out

on that patio, on this patio and at the ceremony site. I have cordless mics and I have a mic for the pastor."

The amenities are immaculate – that's crystal clear. But what's already bringing The Venue at Copper Ridge to the top of brides' wish lists isn't just the space. It's the care, industry knowledge and eye for style that comes with the coordinator in chief.

"I work with photographers and we make sure the schedule is right. I work with all of the vendors they bring in: the DJ, the caterer, everybody. I make sure everything is running smoothly and that the bride doesn't stress," Angie said. "I'm included in the package," she added with a bright laugh.

Something old, something new

The search for a site (31677 Rozella L Egerud) for their events venue didn't start at the current Copper Ridge's rural location. The Andersons had a site in mind closer to Newfolden. The owner wasn't ready to sell, but when she heard what they had planned, she told them she had the perfect spot.

"Her husband had passed away, but his family owned this property," Angie said, referring to land under her feet at The Venue. "She wanted it to be for something specific. She didn't know what she wanted the land to be used for, but she was very excited when we decided we were going to do this. She said, 'The sisters would be very, very happy.' So, we have portraits of them in the entryway."

The Andersons continued to find other partners in the community to help bring their dream to life. Red Lake Electric Cooperative (RLEC) helped enhance service to the site by installing a new three-phase service and transformer upgrade, which supports several individual circuits at the facility. Between smart technology systems, 17 security cameras, bar coolers, curling irons and all that comes with preparing a hot meal, Angie says reliable electricity is "100%" a necessity during an event.

"We're running crockpots, we're running steamers – every outlet in the kitchen and every circuit in the serving room is on its own outlet. The DJ is on their own circuit, too," she said. "I wanted to make sure power wasn't an issue."

The Venue is prepared for whatever the region needs beyond its wedding weekends. The Andersons have already booked concerts and comedians, and corporate outings will become a part of their event calendar. In November, Angie will help host The Vintage Carnival, a popular junk, antique and crafts market out of Thief River Falls.

This kind of multiuse meeting, marrying and making space (28019 Dennis B Kirby) is something for which their Marshall County neighbors are grateful. In fact, a member of county leadership personally thanked Angie for bringing the project to life, telling her it was something needed by the community. "That's neat. That's nice to hear," she said.

RLEC board member Colette Kujava has worked with Angie at Wikstrom Telephone Company for more than 20 years. For her, The Venue is a great boost to the economic growth of her member district – but also an exciting development in the lives of her friends, the Andersons.

"RLEC is very proud of our communities and supportive of The Venue and what it will bring to our area. Rob and Angie found a niche and built their dream," Kujava said. "Personally, I know Angie loves to be attentive to details and make special occasions truly memorable, and I'm glad she'll be able to share that with our region."

As Angie speaks with more newly engaged couples and books more wedding weekends, she too is voicing gratitude for the "happily ever after" she's found. "I'm living my best life," she said.



The outdoor ceremony site is large enough to seat 400 wedding guests.



A separate honeymoon-suite cabin is ready to welcome newlywed couples.

Need help to pay your electric bill? Help is only a phone call away!

Red Lake Electric is prepared to work with members who are in need of assistance paying their electric bills. For more information (21919 Tim B Peterson) about the Cold Weather Rule, call Red Lake Electric Cooperative, visit our website www.redlake-electric.com, or see MN Statutes, Chapter 216B, which governs disconnection policies of residential heating sources from Oct. 1 through April 30. Here are some common questions:

Can my heat be shut off in the winter?

YES, unless you take steps under the Cold Weather Rule (CWR) to protect yourself. You must contact Red Lake Electric Cooperative to apply for protection from having your heat shut off. This is true for all residential customers, including senior citizens and families with young children.

Will you disconnect me without my knowledge?

NO. RLEC will give you a "Disconnection Notice" on your electric bill. This will state the amount you need to pay as well as the date by which you must contact RLEC to avoid disconnection. If you do not contact us by the disconnection date, we will make a courtesy phone call reminding you to make your payment.

How can I keep my heat on or get reconnected if I am already shut off?

You must make and keep a payment plan with Red Lake Electric Cooperative. The payments don't have to be the same amount each month. RLEC will work with you to make suitable arrangements to help you keep your electricity. Once arrangements are made, you must contact Red Lake Electric Cooperative if you are unable to

make a payment or your service may be shut off.

When I contact RLEC to apply for the CWR, what happens?

- You will make a CWR payment plan, which you must keep to be protected.
- If you and the utility cannot agree on a payment plan, you have 10 days to appeal to the Public Utilities Commission.
- The Commission will help you set up a payment plan.
- Your service will stay on during the appeal process.

What happens if I can't make my payments as planned?

If you can't make your payments, call RLEC **immediately** to make a new CWR payment plan. If you do not make your payments, your service may be shut off.

What if I need help reading or understanding notices from my utility?

- The CWR has a "Third-Party Notice" option.
- If you would like help applying for the CWR, you may arrange for another person to get a

copy of any disconnection notices or other important information at the same time you receive it. This may be a friend, family member or anyone who is willing to help you understand the notices or set up a CWR payment plan. This person is not responsible for paying your bill. They are only agreeing to help you understand notices from Red Lake Electric Cooperative.

How do I sign up for Third-Party Notices?

Call Red Lake Electric for a sign-up form. The form must be filled out and signed by both you and the person you want to be notified and mailed back to the utility.

Are military personnel subject to a shutoff?

Minnesota law protects a residential customer if a member of the household has been issued orders into active duty, for deployment or a change in duty station if they are unable to pay their electric bill. You must call Red Lake Electric to set up a payment plan. For more information see MN Statutes, Chapter 325E.028 (Utility Payment Arrangements for Military Personnel).

Federal/state energy assistance

If you need help paying your electric utility bill, you may qualify for state or federal fuel assistance. For complete qualification and application information, contact your local county welfare or community/citizen's action council listed below. These organizations may also provide budget counseling.

Inter-County Community Council

Oklee, MN
Serves East Polk, Pennington and Red Lake counties
218-796-5144
Toll-free: 1-888-778-4008
Fax: 833-792-1046

Northwest Community Action

Badger, MN
Serves East Marshall County
218-528-3258
Toll-free: 1-800-568-5329
Fax: 218-528-3259

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council

Crookston, MN
Serves West Polk County and West Marshall County
218-281-9080
Toll-free: 1-866-264-3729
Fax: 800-475-3102

Red Lake Community Action Agency

Red Lake, MN
Serves Beltrami County
218-679-1880
Fax: 218-679-4291

FOR JUST THE CHANGE IN YOUR POCKET, YOU CAN GAME WITH FRIENDS ON A CONSOLE FOR FIVE HOURS USING ONE KILOWATT-HOUR.



PAYING PENNIES FOR YOUR KILOWATTS – THAT'S THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY.



VALUE OF ELECTRICITY



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, Sept. 20**.

Minnkota Power Cooperative transmission line inspections scheduled for fall

Minnkota Power Cooperative, Red Lake Electric's wholesale power provider, will be inspecting transmission line structures that cross your property twice during the fall of 2024.

1. Vegetation management inspections will be in preparation for vegetation maintenance activities in 2025. This inspection will allow Minnkota to evaluate vegetation growth around electrical infrastructure and within the right of way. Davey Resource Group will be assisting Minnkota personnel in the patrols.
2. Pole inspections and testing are completed to properly evaluate our transmission system to plan for upcoming project work. EXO will be conducting the testing on the poles.

All inspections are done using ATV/UTVs. Minimum land disturbance is anticipated. The purpose of these inspections is to ensure that electricity can be delivered safely and reliably to your area, as well as prioritize project work. If you have questions, please visit Minnkota.com or call 701-795-4000.



Submit your recipes to be published in *Volts & Jolts*. Email to info@redlakeelectric.com or mail to: Red Lake Electric Cooperative, PO Box 430, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750-0430.

Chicken Tot Pie

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 2/3 cup whole milk
- 16 ounces frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon coarse ground black pepper
- 4 cups chicken breast, cooked and chopped
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 32 ounces frozen tater tots

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees and spray 9x13 baking dish (31552 Chelsey D Olson) with baking spray.
2. Mix the cream of chicken soup, sour cream, milk, mixed vegetables, thyme, salt, pepper, chicken and cheese in a large bowl.
3. Pour into baking dish then top with tater tots, lined up neatly in rows.
4. Bake for 45-50 minutes until top is browned and crispy.

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 members. They will appear within the articles in parentheses as such (999999.99 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.



BRIANNE ELLISON

2024 Youth Tour Representative



Hi, my name is Brianne Ellison. I am entering grade 12 at Lincoln High School in Thief River Falls, Minn. I was the Red Lake Electric Co-op youth delegate for the NRECA Youth Tour. This trip is available to those in rural areas anywhere in the United States. Minnesota had 36 delegates. I met everyone and became pretty close friends with a handful of them and still talk to them to this day.

On this trip, we learned why these co-ops are so important in rural areas. We met Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith and had the opportunity to ask them some questions about their intentions while in office. We also listened to a keynote speaker by the name of Mike Schlappi, who had an amazing story about how he didn't let his disability of being paralyzed from the waist down affect his dreams. He was a Paralympian and won one gold and two bronze medals in the Paralympics.

During the days we were there we got to tour the city. We went to the National Mall and went on a Segway tour. We went to Mount Vernon, the National Cathedral and the Holocaust Museum. We had about five hours to walk around the Smithsonian; I went to the African American, American History, and Natural History Smithsonian. My favorite part of the trip was the Segway tour. It was at sunset, so we got to see the sun go down behind the Washington National Monument which even left our tour guide speechless. It made for beautiful pictures.

The Youth Tour also has a tradition of trading pins. Everyone is supplied with pins that have something to do with their state and you try to find as many states as you can. I found 28 of the 48 states that attended. Overall, this trip was a great experience. I met lots of amazing people from all over the state and nation.