

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
OCTOBER 2024

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Sam Pahlen



Family members

- **Wife:** Kayla
- **Children:** Timmy (10), Ivy (8)

Job title

- Journeyman Lineman

How your job has changed while you've worked at RLEC

- The advances in battery power tools

Education

- **High School:** Lafayette High School, Red Lake Falls
- **College:** Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Wadena

Years of service

- 13 years

Favorite part about working at RLEC

- Getting to live and work in the community I grew up in

Hobbies/interests

- Hunting, fishing, golfing, watching my kids' sporting events

Volunteer/member of organizations

- Red Lake Falls Fire Department, Red Lake Falls Sportsman's Club

Favorite sport (watch or play)

- Hockey - Minnesota Wild

Favorite food

- Pizza

Favorite beverage

- Milk

Favorite TV show

- Seinfeld

Favorite restaurant

- Red Pepper

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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.



It's a Matter of (Co-op!) Principles

by Stephanie Johnson

ACE Hardware, State Farm, REI, Land O'Lakes, CHS, and Red Lake Electric all share something in common: We're all cooperatives.

We may be in different industries, but we all share a passion for serving our members (29059 Alan E Kiesow) and helping our communities to thrive. In fact, all cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater community good. October is National Co-op Month, so this is the perfect time to reflect on these principles that have stood the test of time but also provide a framework for the future. Let's take a look at the first three cooperative principles.

VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

As a utility, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. But as a co-op, we are also motivated by service to the community, rather than profits. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of Red Lake Electric. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for co-op programs, initiatives, capital investments and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Because we are guided by seven cooperative principles, it's not just about dollars – it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members. The cooperative way is a values-based business model.

Red Lake Electric is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. We view our role as a catalyst for good and making our corner of the world a better place. And by the way, that sums up the seventh co-op principle, "concern for community."

NEW HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

Our building committee continues to work with Michael Burns Architects. We have visited area facilities to give us ideas regarding space and efficiencies. Our website has FAQs and pictures of the condition of our current headquarters. As always, please call our office if you have any questions. Red

Lake Electric's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board of directors, who helps set long-term priorities for the co-op, also lives locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected by neighbors just like you. We know our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we are continually seeking your input and encourage you to weigh in on important co-op issues and participate in co-op elections.

Our close connection to this community ensures we get a firsthand perspective on members' priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments.

MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

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Demand response season has arrived – is your heating system ready?

by Kelli Brateng

It's time to prepare for the winter season, and we're already hearing that this could be a doozy. The

Farmers' Almanac isn't always right when it comes to predicting the weather (it was well off the mark last winter, when a projected cold, snowy winter ended up unseasonably mild) but the publication's longstanding climate formula (30180 Jonathan D Lee) suggests a colder-than-average December-March is on the horizon.

Whatever happens, you need to make sure your heating system is ready for the chill, especially if you are a voluntary member of Red Lake Electric Cooperative's **demand response program** (often referred to as off-peak). Last year's mild winter meant demand response was deployed for fewer than 85 hours – well below the anticipated level. This year, our co-operative system is preparing for 200 hours of estimated demand response.

When winter demand for electricity gets high (like when many homes and businesses are using electric heat for extended periods), our power provider, Minnkota Power Cooperative, initiates the demand response program across the region. Those who are enrolled are automatically switched to a non-electric backup heat source, like fuel oil, propane or natural gas.

If those backups have not been tested or fuel sources haven't been refilled, a

homeowner may not know there is an issue until demand response hits.

If you are on the demand response (off-peak) program, now is the time to check your backup heating sources to make sure your fuel tanks are full and functioning. Minnkota will run a demand response test in early December, and members should reach out to their cooperative with any questions or concerns before extreme weather hits.

WHY DO WE NEED DEMAND RESPONSE?

Minnkota is typically able to cover its demand with its own energy resources – a mix of coal, wind and hydropower. However, there are times during planned generator outages, extreme weather events or low wind supply that Minnkota must buy power from the energy market. By reducing the demand across the region, Minnkota can protect itself from costly market purchases for peak need that only

comes a few times a year. That, in turn, keeps rates low for consumer-members – like you! By being a part of the demand response program, you can also take advantage of an even lower electric rate without any disruption in comfort.

If you would like more information on how you can save during the winter season, give us a call at the co-op or visit redlakeelectric.com.



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.

Overnight Cinnamon Apple Baked French Toast Casserole

INGREDIENTS

Casserole

- 1 lb loaf sourdough or French bread, cut into chunks
- 3 cups chopped apples (2 large apples)
- 8 large eggs
- 2 cups milk (whole or 2%)
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar, unpacked
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

Streusel Topping and Additional Ingredients

- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 1/2 tsp apple pie spice
- 1/2 cup salted butter, cut into pieces
- Additional toppings such as maple syrup, powdered sugar, whipped cream or caramel sauce, optional

INSTRUCTIONS

- Grease a 9x13 inch casserole dish.
- Chop the bread into bite-sized chunks with a serrated knife and place the chunks in a large bowl.
- Chop the apples into small chunks. (The skin can be peeled off or left on according to personal preference.) Add the apples to the bowl with the bread and stir gently to combine.
- Lay the bread chunks and chopped apples in an even layer in the bottom of the dish.
- In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, cream, sugars, cinnamon and vanilla. Pour evenly over bread, making sure the top is saturated.
- Cover the casserole and store in the fridge overnight.
- When ready to bake the casserole, preheat the oven to 350°F (176°C).
- Bake the casserole uncovered for about 35-40 minutes.
- While the casserole bakes, combine the dry ingredients for the streusel in a small bowl. Add the butter and mash it into the dry mixture until it becomes crumbly.
- Remove the casserole from the oven and sprinkle the streusel over the top of the casserole.
- Continue baking casserole for about 5 minutes, or until the streusel is melted and crisp.
- Allow the casserole to cool slightly.
- Serve warm with syrup or other desired toppings.



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

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

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.

CO-OPS ARE COOL. (celebrate National Co-op Month!)

As a member of Red Lake Electric Cooperative, you're part of something special. You're a member-owner of a rural electric cooperative that strives for innovation, works to give back to its community and provides the region with safe and reliable power. This National Co-op Month, we're celebrating some of the things that make being a co-op member so cool.



THANKS

We want to thank our members for your continued support and engagement this National Co-op Month. You are what makes Red Lake Electric so cool. To learn more about your electric cooperative, visit redlakeelectric.com or give us a call at **218-253-2168**! We are here for you.

CO-OPS VOTE

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES
WWW.VOTE.COOP

THIS NOVEMBER, CO-OPS VOTE

Federal, state and local elections offer opportunities to vote for leaders who support energy policies that promote safe, reliable, affordable energy. In particular, they allow us to elect public officials who understand America's electric cooperatives (28086 Brett Tahranand) and will vote to support issues important to 42 million electric co-op consumer-members across the country.

Co-ops Vote is a program built to give members of the co-op community access to resources and information needed not only to vote, but to vote with co-op issues in mind.

Voting with co-op issues in mind will help ensure continued access to reliable electricity and innovative energy solutions. Together, we have the power to educate lawmakers, build awareness about our issues and concerns and support legislative issues that are important to our communities. The co-op voice is powerful and it starts with you!

BECOME A MINNESOTA CO-OP VOTER IN 6 EASY STEPS

- ✓ **Register to vote:** Check to make sure your Minnesota registration is current.
- ✓ **Learn voter details for your state:** Get information on deadlines, absentee voting and polling places.
- ✓ **Get educated:** Learn about issues critical to keeping your electricity affordable and reliable.
- ✓ **Know the candidates and policymakers:** Find out how they support affordable, reliable electricity in your community.
- ✓ **Share your story:** Talk to your family and friends about your co-op, tell them why you're a **Co-op Voter** and ask them to join you at the polls.
- ✓ **VOTE!**



WHY IS THE CO-OPS VOTE PROGRAM IMPORTANT?

- We must elect public officials who understand and appreciate America's electric cooperatives and will vote to support issues important to 42 million electric cooperative consumer-members across the country.
- Electric cooperatives are a trusted resource in the communities we serve. Elected officials want to hear about the policy issues that affect us and our communities.

Rural communities depend on Co-op Voters like you.
For more information on Co-ops Vote please visit vote.coop.



Operation Round Up® grants total \$11,750

The Red Lake Electric Trust board met recently and awarded 19 grants to area nonprofit and community organizations that totaled \$11,750. Since its inception in 1993, 1,102 Operation Round Up grants totaling \$684,000 have been gifted to area community organizations. The Red Lake Electric Trust receives money for grants from the Operation Round Up program administered by the Red Lake Electric Cooperative. Today, 98% of Red Lake Electric's members (24645 Blair Gustafson) 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.
- TRF Area Food Shelf: \$500 to help purchase food for those in need.

Five 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.
- Re-Turned Pages: \$250 to help purchase and install free little library system in Mentor, MN.
- NCTC Pioneer 90.1 FM: \$500 to help purchase an automated weather reporting software.
- Blazin' Saddles: \$500 to help fund operating costs for organized events.
- Plummer Sportsman Club: \$500 to help upgrade the trap shooting range.

Five area emergency service providers were awarded grants.

- Red Lake Falls Volunteer Ambulance Service: \$1,000 to help purchase three new pagers.
- Plummer Volunteer Fire Department: \$1,000 to help purchase a wildfire truck skid.
- RLF Volunteer Fire Dept: \$1,000 to help upgrade communication equipment.
- Goodridge Area Fire and Rescue: \$1,000 to help purchase suit washer/dryer to clean gear.
- Oklee Fire Department: \$1,000 to help complete the meeting room in the newly built fire hall.

Monies to benefit the youth were awarded to these four organizations:

- Christmas for Pennington County: \$500 to help purchase Christmas gifts for their annual holiday program.
- TRF Chapter of the MN Deer Hunters Association: \$500 to help fund a fall youth day event.
- Discovery Place: \$500 to help purchase a laminator machine for youth projects and crafts.
- Satisfy the Hunger Backpack Program: \$500 to help purchase food for students in need to bring home for the weekend.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



FOR JUST THE CHANGE IN YOUR POCKET, YOU CAN COZY UP UNDER AN ELECTRIC BLANKET FOR FIVE HOURS USING ONE KILOWATT-HOUR.



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



VALUE OF ELECTRICITY



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

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

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173. Tax Status (For corporations by nonprofit organizations authorized to send an nonprofit status): **Check one**

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Don't Let Money Get Sucked Out of Your Wallet

Ghouls, goblins and ghosts might be scary, but they aren't nearly as scary as a high electric bill. There may be electronics in your home sucking power out of your outlets (32764 Cameron Lundein) and money out of your wallet, even when they aren't in use. Televisions, computers, DVD players, cable boxes with DVR, cellphone chargers, printers and game consoles are just a few of the culprits that unknowingly suck energy. Over time, the cost adds up. Safe Electricity has some tips to help you stop energy vampires in your home:

- When possible, unplug electronics that you are not using.
- Plug electronics into a power strip and turn the power strip off when items are not in use.
- Purchase smart power strips for your computers and televisions.

These devices sense when the computer or television is sleeping or off. The smart strip cuts off power to related electronics, such as DVD players, video game consoles and printers.

- Buy low-standby products. Most Energy Star-endorsed products draw smaller-than-average

amounts of electricity when turned off.

- Avoid electronics with unnecessary features as these might use more energy.

For more energy efficiency tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.

ENERGY VAMPIRES

Safe
Electricity.org



TOP OFFENDERS

1. TVs
2. Home computers
3. Video game consoles
4. Surround sound systems
5. Cell phone & tablet chargers