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
NOVEMBER 2024

INCREDIBLY PLUGGED IN

PAGE 4

RLEC Volts&Jolts

NOVEMBER 2024 – Vol. 60, No. 2

Official Publication of
Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.
P.O. Box 430 • 412 International Drive S.W.
Red Lake Falls, MN 56750-0430
(USPS 663-400)
Subscription rate: $2.50 per year

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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.

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.

May Your Holidays Be Merry and Bright

by Stephanie Johnson

As November kicks off, it's hard to believe we'll soon be gathering with family and friends to celebrate the holiday season. This festive time of year brings joy and warmth, but as the weather gets cooler and we spend more time indoors, the holidays can also bring increased energy use and a higher risk of electrical and fire hazards.

As your local electric cooperative, our team at Red Lake Electric Cooperative cares about your well-being. This month, I'd like to share a few practical tips to help you stay safe and efficient during the holiday season.

SAFETY FIRST

My family truly enjoys decorating our home for the holidays. Before we deck the halls, we always check electrical cords and light strands to make sure they aren't frayed or damaged. This gives us peace of mind, knowing our holiday lights are ready to safely brighten our home. We also double check the lights we use outside to make sure they're rated for outdoor use.

Like many households, we also enjoy holiday-scented candles. While festive, candles can create fire hazards and should never be left unattended. One of the best and easiest ways to safeguard your home is to test smoke alarms often. It's best to check smoke alarms (21060 Jadon D Skjerven) on the first of each month, so it's easy to remember. Testing smoke alarms only takes a few seconds and could save lives, so make it a habit.

'TIS THE SEASON FOR SAVINGS

Spending more time indoors with a few more guests in the home can really impact home energy use. By taking a few small steps to save energy during the holiday season, you can lower your bills.

I like to remind my family members to mind the thermostat. Since heating and cooling makes up the majority of home energy consumption, the thermostat is one of the best places for savings. Lower it a few degrees, especially when you have family or friends stopping by. Good company brings additional warmth to your home.

Your family can also save energy by decorating with LED holiday lights. LEDs are the most energy efficient lighting options available, and they last much longer than traditional bulbs.

There's no denying one of the best parts of the holiday season is the food – not just the meals but the time we spend together in the kitchen. There are many ways to save in the heart of your home, but one of the best approaches is to cook (31663 Tyler S Ness) with smaller countertop appliances, such as air fryers, slow cookers and toaster ovens. These handy appliances consume a fraction of the energy used to heat the oven, creating the perfect recipe for mealtime and energy savings.

I hope you will implement some of these energy-saving and safety tips into your holiday plans. For additional advice, visit our website. We're here to help you with safety and savings year-round.

From your friends at Red Lake Electric Cooperative, we hope your holiday season is merry and bright.

VETERANS DAY

To all veterans of all branches, thank you for your sacrifice, your bravery, and the example you set for us all. In short, thank you for your service. Not only should we thank the military this Veterans Day, but we should thank them throughout the year for the service they perform for our country.

SLOW IS SMOOTH, SMOOTH IS FAST

NAVY SEALS MANTRA SHOULD GUIDE ENERGY TRANSITION

As calls to decarbonize the nation's electric grid continue to grow, a series of concerns about the reliability of the systems that power our modern society are beginning to emerge.

When planning for the future of energy in the U.S., the Navy SEALs' philosophy of "Slow is smooth, smooth is fast" offers a valuable lesson in how to approach this massive, complex challenge with both urgency and care. The mantra emphasizes a fundamental principle: Rushing leads to mistakes, and mistakes lead to inefficiency or failure.

With the electric grid, too much is at stake to risk a significant collapse. Pushing too rapidly into new technologies and away from dependable energy sources – like coal, natural gas and nuclear – jeopardizes the stability of these critical systems. The consequences could be severe, leading to energy shortages, price spikes or even blackouts.

While more weather-dependent resources, like wind and solar, are being added to the grid, baseload power plants will still be needed into the future to ensure stability. Ensuring these facilities (24751 Tom L Schmitz) continue to provide 24/7 electricity will provide time for technology to develop, for new power line systems to connect communities and for supply chain constraints to be alleviated.

Maintaining a robust and diverse power supply is also critical as the demand for electricity continues to increase related to the development of data centers, artificial intelligence and other emerging digital systems. Keeping pace with these fast-growing sectors of our economy will be vitally important to factor into the decision-making process on our energy future.

The energy transition is not a race to the finish line, but a marathon that requires endurance, strategy and precision. "Slow is smooth, smooth is fast" teaches us that rushing through critical phases can lead to unintended consequences, and that success comes from careful preparation, deliberate action and a long-term view.

While environmental goals are important, the reliability of our energy systems must remain paramount. A transition that sacrifices reliability in the name of speed will only slow progress in the long run. By moving deliberately and strategically, we can ensure that the future of energy is reliable, affordable and sustainable.

INCREDIBLY PLUGGED IN

By **Kaylee Cusack**
Photography **Michael Hoeft**

Red Lake Electric Cooperative member collects latest in battery-powered garage tech

Ever since Cameron Chisholm got his new set of wheels this summer, the people of Thief River Falls, Minnesota, won't stop staring. Kids laugh and wave, their parents and grandparents gawk in befuddlement. Just the other day, his ride caught the eye of a small senior at the grocery store.

"She came up to my window and tapped on it. She's like, 'What is this? This is neat!'" Chisholm recounted. "It's been overwhelmingly very positive."

This new celebrity status came along with the delivery of Chisholm's new Tesla Cybertruck Foundation Series, one of the latest – and most angular – electric vehicles (EV) on the road. The nearly 7,000-pound pickup boasts more than 300 miles of range on a single charge and 11,000 pounds of towing capacity, perfect for a tech-forward camper like Chisholm.

"This is a rolling technology showcase," he said. "There's a lot of engineering firsts on this thing."

Chisholm is an early adopter drawn to the latest and greatest gadgetry. He's been driving electric since 2017, first with a couple of small BMW i3 models, then to a Tesla Model 3 and eventually a Tesla Model Y. He's been on the waiting list (28497 Cory Peterson) for a Cybertruck since 2019, three days after the pickup was announced.

"I'm a car enthusiast. I have a manual transmission, little German-British sports car," he said, pointing to the blue MINI Cooper parked near his home. "So for me to give up the manual … EVs are so much fun, though. Once you get that instant torque, it's like going from analog to digital."

Even as a life-long northerner who knows how brutal a Minnesota winter can be, Chisholm hasn't run into any problems with winter driving. He tells people the truth – the range drops with the cold, just like any other vehicle.

"They actually work quite well. Most people are just trying to frame the transition to an electric car in what they know, which is a gas engine. They concentrate on, how do you fuel it? Well, if you have an EV, you don't really think about that anymore," he said, adding that most EVs will direct the driver to the nearest charging station on longer road trips. "At home, you just plug it in overnight like your phone."

Chisholm is one of the few Red Lake Electric Cooperative (RLEC) members who have taken advantage of the co-op's off-peak EV charging program. As a voluntary participant, he charges his Cybertruck when electric demand is lower on the system – typically overnight. All he had to do was set up a 240-volt circuit in his garage. RLEC made the rest easy.

RLEC Manager of Member Services Kelli Brateng says her rural Minnesota territory isn't quite a hot spot for EV activity (yet), but the off-peak charging program is slowly gaining traction.

"The members who do have it like it for the discounted kilowatt-hour (kWh) rate," she said, explaining that the charger is metered separately at just 5.6 cents/kWh, which is approximately half the standard rate. RLEC also offers a 100% rebate on charging equipment installed on the off-peak program, and Chisholm was happy to take advantage of that as well.

Life electrified

If you take a look around the yard, you can tell the love of electric doesn't end with EVs. Nearly everywhere you look you can find something battery powered. Chisholm's garage is stocked with electric power tools, an inverter for camping, a misting fan, a snowblower, a push mower and zero-turn mower, an air compressor, a vacuum, a chainsaw, a leaf blower, a mini boiler, an e-bike – even a battery-powered hydrostatic tractor for his heavier yard maintenance needs.

When asked, Chisholm can't tell you how many pieces of electric technology he has. But he can tell you why it's his first choice.

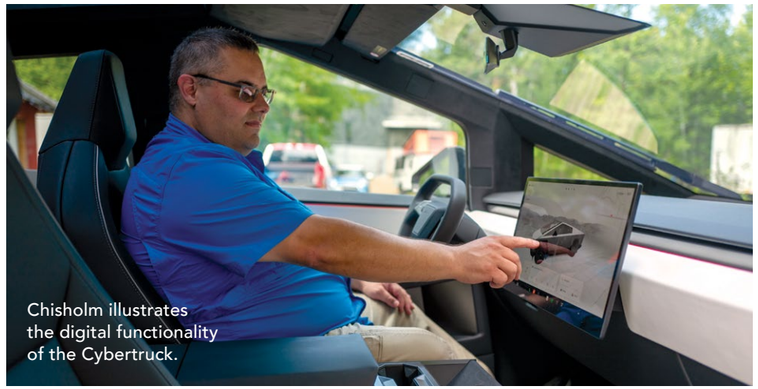
"It's convenient, clean. It's not reliant on any other country. We can generate electricity from multiple sources here," he said. "It's kind of fun, too. Like I said, I'm a bit of a gadget freak, so I like learning about new technology like this. And it's getting good and cheap, so why not?"

One could say the garage has been fully electrified. Now, Chisholm will be turning to his home, which he has been working to build himself for several years. The house is currently heated with propane, but he's looking into electric options (26722 Harvey Solheim) for the future, including heat pumps, sand-bed storage heat and fixed energy storage.

"He has so much enthusiasm when he talks about his electrification plans. If it's new and electric, he's going to try it," Brateng said. Chisholm has told her he's looking into a new induction range with a built-in 5-kWh battery so it can operate off a 120-volt wall outlet. "Although the range isn't quite available for nationwide deliveries, you could tell the excitement Cameron had for the technology."

And he's willing to share that excitement. If you ever see him cruising Minnesota in his Cybertruck, wave him down for a chat. Goodness knows everyone else does.

"All the time," he laughed. "It's insane."



Chisholm illustrates the digital functionality of the Cybertruck.

Chisholm unplugs his EGO-brand electric lawn mower.

Larger yard jobs call for the 100% electric Solectrac e25H, a hydrostatic transmission tractor with a 22 kilowatt-hour battery.

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

Minnkota Power Cooperative, Red Lake Electric Cooperative and its partners will again provide an opportunity for area electricians to obtain credits for license renewal by attending one of the six continuing education classes being offered throughout eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota.

Instructor Tim Pull will present "100 Questions on the 2023 NEC," which looks at several code questions that may be asked when taking a typical electrical exam for a journeyman or masters license. The seminars are approved in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota for eight hours of continuing education credit necessary for renewing electrical licenses. The classes will be held at the following locations:

Tuesday, January 7, 2025
Fargo Holiday Inn
3803 13th Avenue South
Fargo, ND

Wednesday, January 8, 2025
Fargo Holiday Inn
3803 13th Avenue South
Fargo, ND

Thursday, January 16, 2025
Bemidji Eagles Club
1270 Neilson Avenue SE
Bemidji, MN

Tuesday, January 21, 2025
Bigwood Event Center
921 Western Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN

Wednesday, January 29, 2025
Minnkota Power Cooperative
5301 32nd Avenue South
Grand Forks, ND

Thursday, January 30, 2025
Minnkota Power Cooperative
5301 32nd Avenue South
Grand Forks, ND

This marks the 37th year of the successful program, which is aimed at providing area trade allies with the latest information on electrical code and practices. Taking the class (30447 Dale Umbreit) on multiple days will not qualify for 16 code credits. The registration fee is **$80 for eight code credits**. Registration can be done online at **www.minnkota.com** and must be completed at least seven days prior to the seminar.

For residential building contractor continuing education workshops, contact your local home builders association.

For more information about the program, please call **(701) 795-4292** or e-mail any questions to **contractortraining@minnkota.com**.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

7:15 - 8 a.m.
Registration

8 a.m. - noon
Classroom instruction

Noon - 1 p.m.
Lunch served

1 - 5 p.m.
Classroom instruction

$80
REGISTRATION FEE

ELECTRIC HEAT EXEMPTION

This is to certify that the primary source of heat for my residence is electricity and I am eligible for the electric heating sales tax exemption as provided by Minnesota State Law. The primary source is the source that supplies more heat than any other source for the largest period of time during the heating season.

Date _____

Account Number _____

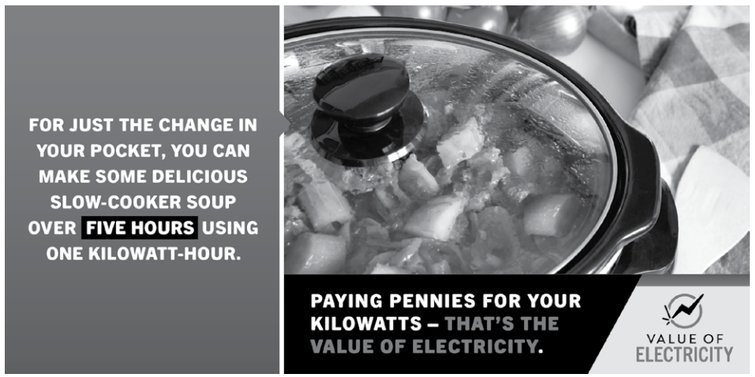
Social Security Number _____

Signature _____

KEEP YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION UP TO DATE

Has your address changed? Do you have a new cellphone number? Did you drop your landline? Then it is time to contact your electric cooperative to verify and/or update the information we have on your account. By keeping your contact information up to date, you can ensure your cooperative is able to reach you regarding billing and account information, outage notifications, capital credits and more.

You can verify and update your information by logging into SmartHub. You may also email info@redlakeelectric.com or call the office at 218-253-2168 or 800-245-6068 to verify and update your contact information.



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.

Recipe Corner

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.

Sausage, Egg & Biscuit Breakfast Casserole

INGREDIENTS

- 16 oz container of biscuits
- 6 eggs
- ½ cup milk
- 1 ½ cups of shredded cheddar/jack mix
- 2 cups cut-up breakfast sausage
- Salt and pepper to taste

INGREDIENTS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and spray a 9x13 casserole dish with cooking spray.
2. Open up a package of biscuits and cut each into 6 pieces.
3. Spread cut biscuits in the bottom of the greased casserole dish.
4. Cook breakfast sausage (31688 Kevin M Brekke) according to package directions. Cut into bite-sized pieces and spread over top of biscuits.
5. Sprinkle ½ cup of shredded cheese over the sausage.
6. Beat 6 eggs with milk and pour over the biscuits and sausage.
7. Sprinkle remaining cheese over the top and add a shake of salt and pepper.
8. Bake at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes until the eggs are set.

Red Lake Electric Cooperative

Winter storm outages happen.

PREPARE FOR THEM.

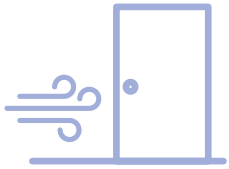
Red Lake Electric Cooperative prides itself on high power reliability, but sometimes outages are out of our control. Just last winter, our co-op neighbors at Cass County Electric Cooperative in southeastern North Dakota experienced an unprecedented Christmas storm that iced up power poles and wires to their breaking point. Hundreds of members were without power for several days until the lines could be repaired. It could happen again – anywhere.

Be prepared for a winter storm with this checklist from Red Lake Electric Cooperative.

BEFORE STORM

- Adjust your refrigerator/freezer to the coldest settings.
- Gather and test flashlights/portable radios and have extra batteries on hand.
- Fully charge electronics, including cellphones and laptops.
- Get out extra blankets, coats, hats and mittens.
- Prepare an outage emergency kit with items you would need for several days without power, including nonperishable food and water. Don't forget medications or pet supplies.

DURING OUTAGE



- Dress warmly using layers.
- Unplug sensitive electronics – power may surge when restored.
- Check for restoration updates on your co-op website and/or social media.
- If you lose heat, close the doors of unused rooms and place towels under the doors.
- If using a generator, only run it outdoors and at at least 20 feet away from windows and doors.

AFTER OUTAGE

- If you see downed power lines, assume they are energized – don't touch them or drive on them.
- Restock your outage emergency kit.
- If your refrigerated/frozen food has been exposed (30215 Kerri Gackle) to 40-degree temperatures for longer than two hours, throw it out.