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
MAY/JUNE 2023

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Troy Schmitz

Above Photo: Pictured from left to right: (front) Troy, Kegan, Stacie; (back) Caylee, Bailey, Brooke, Hunter

Right Photo: Troy Schmitz operating the 1964 bombardier. The bombardier is being used to string the overhead line for a three-phase line being built.

Family members

- **Wife:** Stacie
- **Children:** 4 children
  Brooke (Grand Forks, N.D.), Bailey (Roscoe, Minn.), Hunter (Fargo, N.D.) and Kegan (age 15)

Job title

- Crew Foreman

Volunteer/member of organizations

- Red Lake Falls Blue Line Club
- Knights of Columbus
- St. Joseph's Church, Red Lake Falls

Favorite sport (watch or play)

- Hockey

Hobbies/interests

- Hunting, fishing, camping and watching sports

Favorite TV show/movie

- M*A*S*H

Education

- **High School:** Lafayette High School, Red Lake Falls
- **College:** Wadena Technical College

Favorite food

- Steak

Favorite beverage

- Orange juice

Favorite restaurant

- Sparkey's 218 Bar & Grill (Red Lake Falls)

Favorite part about working at RLEC

- Storm jobs and fellow employees

Years of service

- 19 years at Red Lake Electric
- Previously worked 10 years at Red River Valley Cooperative Power Association before moving back to Red Lake Falls

Linder serves 21 years as director

Steve Linder was recognized at Red Lake Electric Cooperative's annual meeting for having served 21 years as board director. The 21 years spanned from March of 2002 to March of 2023. Linder represented District 4 of the cooperative's service territory which includes the townships of Badger, Lessor, Hill River, Poplar River, Lambert, Chester, Garnes, Equality, Johnson and Hickory. He was presented a plaque in appreciation of his years of service by the cooperative.

RLEC Volts & Jolts

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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.

Preparing to serve you better

by Stephanie Johnson

Providing reliable power to you is and will always be top priority for Red Lake Electric Cooperative. These days, power reliability seems to be making news now more than ever.

As the energy industry continues to transition and more segments of the economy are becoming electrified, such as vehicles, machinery and even lawn equipment, additional pressures are being placed on our nation's electric grid (20201 Jeffrey Benke).

With summer storm season upon us, I thought it would be a good time to tell you about a few measures we're taking to ensure you continue receiving the reliable power you depend on and deserve.

Let me be the first to say I love trees and the charm they add to our communities, and I know you do, too. While trees provide shade and add beauty to our area, you may be surprised to learn that overgrown vegetation accounts for about half of all power outages.

That's why we strive to keep the co-op's power lines clear in right-of-way (ROW) areas. A ROW area is the land a co-op uses to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. This ROW enables Red Lake Electric to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder distribution power lines. The overall goal of our vegetation management strategy is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our area.

Planned outages improve reliability

Although it may seem counterintuitive, we also maintain power reliability (28841 Eric M Wold) through planned, controlled outages. By carefully cutting power to one part of our local area for a few hours, Red Lake Electric can perform system repairs and upgrades, which ultimately improve electric service. Rest assured, we will always do our best to notify you in advance of a planned outage. We announce planned outages on area radio stations, on our Facebook page and occasionally with a phone call.

Vegetation management is an essential tool in ensuring power reliability and minimizing the risk of outages. As advancements become more accessible and costs drop, we anticipate using additional technologies to ensure a consistent energy supply while managing the environment.

Steve Linder retirement

Steve Linder was elected to the Red Lake Electric board of directors representing District 4 in March 2002. For 21 years, he has faithfully served as a director for this cooperative, retiring on March 29, 2023. Steve also served as a director on the Square Butte board for 11 years from April 2010 to March 2021. I sincerely appreciate the work that Steve has done serving on the board, not only in District 4, but for all of the members. We will miss his presence, leadership and voice in the board room. Our best to you, Steve, and thanks again for your service to Red Lake Electric.

THINKING ABOUT ADDING YOUR OWN GENERATION?

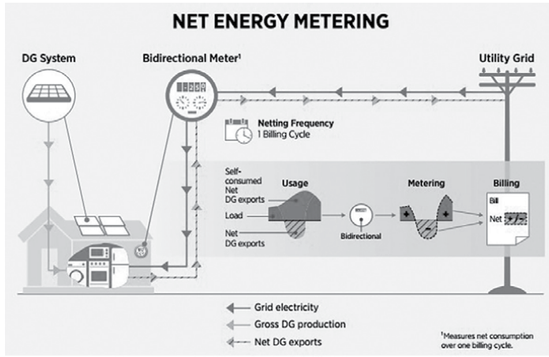
Are you thinking about installing a solar panel system, wind turbine or a standby system that can connect to the grid to supplement your power usage? These systems are called distributed energy resource (DER) generation, and you must apply for interconnection with Red Lake Electric Cooperative before you move forward with a project. What is interconnection? Interconnection is adding power back safely onto the Red Lake Electric Cooperative energy grid.

The interconnection process ensures:

- Your system is wired properly.
- Red Lake Electric Cooperative's equipment is adequately sized for the project.
- Safety for you and Red Lake Electric Cooperative's personnel working on the power lines.

To get started on your system, please follow the steps below:

1. Give Red Lake Electric Cooperative a call to discuss your project early in the consideration process.
2. Log on to Red Lake Electric Cooperative's website and click on the "Distributed Generation" tab. Read and scroll down, then click on the Nova Portal link.
3. When fully approved by Red Lake Electric Cooperative, have the project (31266 Aaron Qualls) connected by a qualified electrician and certified installer.
4. Electrical work must be inspected and pass inspection by the state electrical inspector.
5. Notify Red Lake Electric Cooperative when the project is complete for an inspection and testing.



Source: MN PUC (https://mn.gov/puc/activities/economic-analysis/distributed-energy/net-metering/)

If you have any questions and are considering a solar, wind or standby system, please call **218-253-2168** or **1-800-245-6068** or go to **redlakeelectric.com**.

IT'S TIME TO GET PUMPED

about air-source heat pumps!

Did you know that one system can keep you cool in the summer, warm you in the winter and save you money all year long?

These are only a few of the reasons why you should get pumped about air-source heat pumps!

Air-source heat pumps are superefficient because they transfer warm air from one place to another rather than burn fuel. In the summer, warm air is pushed from inside your home and replaced with cool air. In the winter, the air-source heat pump does the reverse. It pulls the warm air from the outside and pushes it into your home, keeping it at a comfortable temperature all year round.

This self-contained, electric system (23513 Robert A Helgeland) utilizes existing ductwork to connect the outdoor compress or unit and the indoor air handling unit.

TOP 5 REASONS TO GET PUMPED ABOUT AIR-SOURCE HEAT PUMPS

#1 Great incentives

Up to $1,500 in rebates are available from Red Lake Electric Cooperative for the installation of a qualifying air-source heat pump.

#2 Comfort

With a single system delivering warm and cool air throughout your home, its versatility keeps your comfort in mind around the clock.

#3 Efficiency

Since heat is moved instead of generated, your system will deliver three times more energy than the electricity consumed.

#4 Low off-peak rates

In addition to rebates, Red Lake Electric Cooperative offers low off-peak electric heating rates (26586 Carol A Kjos) that are about half of the standard rate.

#5 Cold-weather capable

Cold-climate heat pumps can operate efficiently in below-zero temperatures. This cutting-edge technology is a fan favorite in North Dakota and Minnesota.

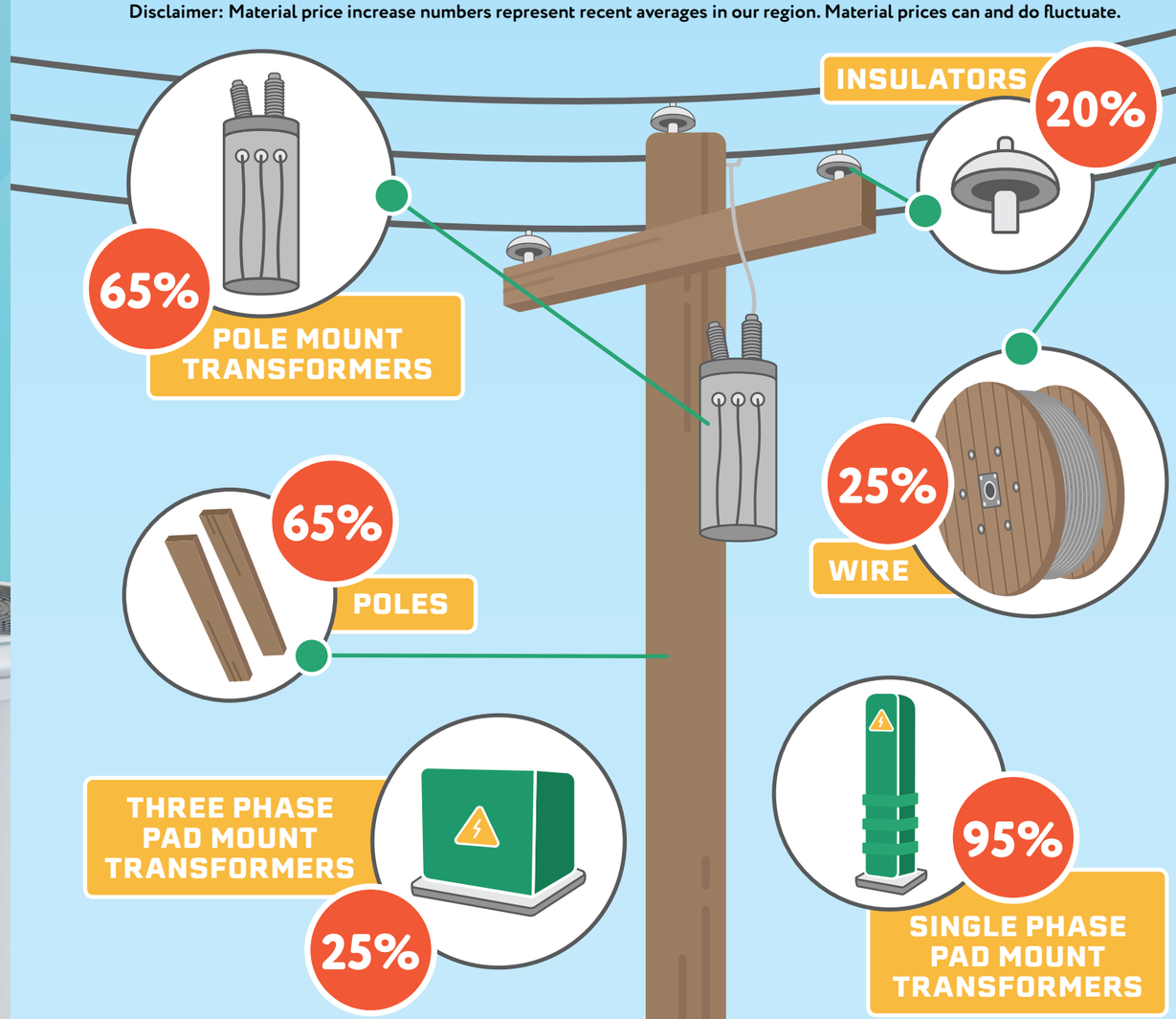
Contact your energy experts at Red Lake Electric Cooperative and get PUMPED to learn more about how you can save on your installation of a new air-source heat pump!

THE RISING COST OF ELECTRIC UTILITY MATERIALS

As inflation has increased the cost of many goods and services in our daily lives, your electric cooperative remains focused on keeping your rates as stable as possible. That job is becoming more challenging as electric utility material prices have increased in an unprecedented manner over the last two years.

Many of the cost increases being experienced cannot be avoided or easily cut out. We must continue to invest in utility poles, transformers, wire and insulators to ensure you receive reliable service (30848 Gus Bruggeman). The graphic below shows some of the core components that your electric cooperative needs to operate and the corresponding price increases since 2020. As always, your cooperative will continue to manage costs to the best of its ability and work to ensure you receive the best possible value for your energy dollar.

Disclaimer: Material price increase numbers represent recent averages in our region. Material prices can and do fluctuate.



5 THINGS TO KNOW

about our wind energy

June 15 is Global Wind Day! Red Lake Electric Cooperative is celebrating this key renewable resource by reflecting on why wind energy is so important to our diverse power portfolio. Here are some numbers you should know.

1. We were among the FIRST in the wind sphere.

Minnkota Power Cooperative's system of members (including Red Lake Electric Cooperative) is acknowledged as a regional leader for building the first two commercial-scale, utility-owned wind turbines in North Dakota in 2002. This leadership was recognized by the Department of Energy.

2. Our cooperative system uses energy from FIVE wind centers.

Minnkota (our wholesale power provider) owns two separate wind turbines near the towns of Petersburg and Valley City, N.D., and holds purchased power agreements (22406 LouAnn Hoglo) for energy produced at three wind farms near Langdon, Valley City and Center, N.D.

3. More than ONE-THIRD of our power capacity is wind.

Wind makes up 34% of our system's generation capacity. Around 56% of our capacity comes from coal at the Milton R. Young Station near Center, N.D., and another 8% comes from hydropower at North Dakota's Garrison Dam. The final 2% comes from the power market and other sources.

4. About 459 megawatts of wind capacity is available in our system.

We never expect wind to be blowing at all times at every one of our wind facilities, so actual electricity output at any particular time can vary dramatically. However, 459 MW is enough to power more than 225,000 homes if every turbine were to hit its peak capacity.

5. Receive up to 100% wind energy from Infinity Renewable Energy.

Members who enroll in the Infinity program can choose a designated percentage of electricity used that they would like to be derived from renewable resources. Renewable energy credits (RECs) are retired on the participants' behalf as record/proof of the purchase. Contact (Red Lake Electric Cooperative) to see how you can get involved!

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.

Memorial Day

We are thankful for the brave men and women who selflessly gave the ultimate sacrifice so that we can enjoy the freedoms their service affords us. This May, please join us in pausing to reflect on the sacrifices made by our nation's veterans.

Red Lake Electric will be closed Monday, May 29, for Memorial Day.

If you have an electrical outage or emergency, please call 218-253-2200.

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.

Blueberry Pretzel Salad

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups chopped pretzels
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 cups Cool Whip (or whipped cream)
- 21 oz blueberry pie filling
- 1 cup blueberries

Instructions

1. Mix together chopped pretzels, brown sugar, and melted butter. Spread on a large rimmed baking sheet. Bake at 400˚F for 6-8 minutes. Allow the pretzels to cool and then break them into small pieces. Set aside.
2. Beat together softened cream cheese, granulated sugar, and vanilla extract. Fold in the Cool Whip. Set aside.
3. Combine the blueberry pie filling and blueberries.
4. Add the blueberry mixture and sugared pretzels to the bowl with the cream cheese mixture. Fold to combine. Serve within a few hours. Store in the refrigerator (29945 Denise Yonke) until ready to serve.

Red Lake Electric Cooperative

ENERGY EFFICIENCY INCENTIVES FOR 2023

Make your home more comfortable and energy efficient with help from Red Lake Electric Cooperative. Great rebates and incentives are available to help you upgrade your heating and cooling system, water heater and chargers for electric vehicles. Not sure where to start? Check out our rebate list below for heating and cooling options. Contact Red Lake Electric Cooperative for expert advice (31574 Derek J Mogen) on improving your home's energy performance.

Electric Heating Rebates

Must be on off-peak

Electric plenum heaters

Easily converts your existing fossil fuel furnace into a dual-fuel heating system. You are able to use the most efficient, cost-effective heating source – fossil fuel or electricity – at any time.

Rebate of $50 per kilowatt (kW)

Electric thermal storage heaters

Draws electricity during off-peak hours when it is cheaper. Heat is stored in specially designed bricks to provide comfort 24 hours a day.

Rebate of $75 per kW

Air-source heat pumps (including mini-split ductless option)

Works just like a central air conditioner in the summer. In the fall and winter, they provide super-efficient supplemental heat.

Up to 16 SEER: Rebate of $300 per ton
17 SEER or greater: Rebate of $600 per ton

Geothermal heat pumps

Provides the highest efficiency for space heating and cooling available today. The system transfers heat to and from the earth using only small amounts of electricity.

Closed loop: Rebate of $400 per ton
Open loop: Rebate of $200 per ton

Electric underfloor boiler

A popular off-peak option because the system transfers heat consistently across the floor to reach people and objects, providing both comfort and efficiency. Applications include electric boiler with hydronic tubing.

Rebate of $75 per kW

Other electric heating systems

Options include electric baseboards, cove heaters, electric floor cable, mats and more.

Rebate of $25 per kW

Electric Water Heater Rebates

Must be on off-peak

100 gallon or greater
$500/unit

56-99 gallon
$400/unit

55 gallon or less
$150/unit

Bonus rebates:

Add $250
if converting from natural gas or propane.

Add $100
for new building construction (shops, cabins, etc.).

New construction (50 gallon)
FREE unit *(primary residence only)*

Electric Vehicle Charger Rebates

240V Level 2 Charger

Must be on off-peak

Electric vehicle or hybrid
100% rebate

Commercial – Forklifts, Zambonis, etc.
$50 per kW

Residential Charger

Commercial Charger

All equipment must be new and installed on Red Lake Electric Cooperative's system.

Equipment must be installed on RLEC's off-peak program.

Contact Member Services for more details!

218-253-2168