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 2023

Red Lake Electric Cooperative will be closed Thursday, Nov. 23, for Thanksgiving

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

RLEC Volts & Jolts

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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** 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.

Serving up Savings

by Stephanie Johnson

The holiday season is just around the corner and soon, festive music will flood the airwaves, sparkling lights and decorations will adorn homes and businesses, and good tidings will abound.

The holidays also bring a frenzy of decorating, cooking and family gatherings, and amid the hectic hustle and bustle, you may receive higher-than-usual energy bills.

Keeping this in mind, I thought this month would be a good time to remind Red Lake Electric members of a few programs and efficiency tips to help lower your monthly energy use.

Programs designed to help you save

Winter months typically bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. Making minor, low-cost improvements, like weatherstripping exterior doors and caulking around old, drafty windows can make a positive impact on energy bills.

We also offer low off-peak rates, which can help you achieve greater savings (25291 Anders S Christensen) by controlling when you use the most energy at home.

Our team is available to help assist you with decisions about home energy improvements. I encourage you to give us a call if you'd like to learn about specific programs and services that can lower your bills.

Be festive without breaking the bank

With holiday lights adorning homes for several months, make the switch to LEDs to save energy. LED holiday lights use 88% less energy than incandescent holiday lights. To put that into perspective, the Department of Energy estimates that with standard holiday decorations, LED lights typically increase energy bills by about $5 to $7. But with incandescent lights, energy bills will typically increase by $33 or more. For homes that go above and beyond with incandescent holiday lighting (think Clark Griswold), energy bills could increase by as much as $350. Beyond energy savings, LEDs provide additional benefits, such as being shock-resistant, shatterproof and cool to the touch, making them safer for the home.

You can also lower energy use by conveniently managing holiday lighting. Smart light timers can help you save energy by connecting to a smartphone app or voice assistant to program lights to turn on and off at set times. If you don't use smart home technology, you can still save energy by using traditional timers.

Additional easy ways to save during the holiday season include turning off overhead lights and using your Christmas tree to illuminate your home. If you have a fireplace, remember to close the flue when you're not burning a fire to ensure heat doesn't escape through the chimney.

Cook up energy savings in the kitchen

If you plan to have family and friends over this holiday season, you can cook up energy savings by using small countertop appliances like microwaves, air fryers and slow cookers when possible, as they use much less energy than the stovetop or oven.

When using the oven, bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency. After all, it takes as much energy to cook one dish as it does to cook several. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the recipe's end time and allow the residual heat to finish baking the dish. Once the food is done, leave the stove door ajar to allow the residual heat to warm the room. When using the stove top, match the pan size to the burner to maximize the stove top's efficiency.

I hope a few of these tips will be helpful as we approach the holiday season. Remember, we're here to answer any questions you have about managing energy use or your monthly bills. With a little planning upfront, you can find efficient ways to save on everything from holiday décor to your favorite soup recipes.

From your friends at Red Lake Electric Cooperative, we hope you have a wonderful holiday season.

Ready for response

With mild winter predicted, demand response program prepared for system/market anomalies

by Kelli Brateng

In Minnesota, we can always appreciate a break from brutally cold and snowy winters. We might get that break this season – the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is predicting above-average temperatures and below-average precipitation for our region.

However, the winter climate isn't the only consideration behind the deployment of your cooperative's demand response (off-peak) program. The power supply experts at Minnkota Power Cooperative (our wholesale power provider) will be monitoring several factors throughout the winter season, but they anticipate the standard 150-200 hours of demand response.

"What actually happens depends largely on weather, but also on system and market conditions," explained Dan Trebil, Minnkota's energy supply manager. "While the energy market has softened somewhat from the previous two years, we are still experiencing significant volatility. Any unusual system conditions, generator outages, icing on wind farms, etc., can adversely affect this."

Trebil says that at this time his team is not expecting any conditions wildly out of the ordinary, especially given the baseload nature of Minnkota's coal-based plants. The Milton R. Young Station and Coyote Station have proven time and time again to be reliable sources of electricity for the cooperatives and communities served through the Minnkota-Northern Municipal Power Agency Joint System, and they are well prepared for the upcoming winter season. With that being said, unplanned outages (26391 Wayne Swanson) can occur at any time – even with wind generation.

"In the winter, the wind farms can experience anything from icing to cold-temperature and/or high-wind shutdowns. These types of generator outages can lead to an increased need for demand response, especially if they occur during extreme weather conditions," Trebil said.

Minnkota works hard to keep any "control periods" to less than 200 collective hours a season to lessen the impact on member-consumers, while also garnering the value that the demand response program provides to homes, the co-op itself, and the entirety of the electric grid. In cases where Minnkota's systemwide load exceeds its generation capabilities, they can implement the demand response program to avoid purchasing high-priced energy from the regional grid. This not only balances energy across the grid, but also saves the cooperatives money, which allows them to keep electric rates stable year to year.

If you are a demand response program participant, now is the time to make sure your home is prepared for the winter. Be sure that all back-up heat sources are functioning and that any necessary fuel sources (such as fuel oil or propane) are refilled. Demand response can activate without much notice, even during somewhat mild weather in your area.

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.

RUTH'S CHRIS SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE

Ingredients

- 3 lbs. sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1" pieces
- 3/4 c. brown sugar
- 1/3 c. half and half
- 1/4 c. butter, melted
- 1 egg
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 1/4 tsp. salt

Brown Sugar Pecan Crumble Topping:

- 3/4 c. brown sugar
- 3/4 c. chopped pecans
- 1/2 c. flour
- 1/4 c. butter, melted
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. nutmeg
- Pecan halves *(for garnish, if desired)*

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium baking dish, spray with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Wash, peel, and boil the sweet potatoes, over medium high heat. (Depending on how large or small they are cut, this takes 14-18 minutes.) To test the potatoes for doneness, pierce with a fork or knife. If the potato piece breaks apart easily, they are done.
3. Transfer the cooked potatoes to a mixing bowl and add the brown sugar, half and half, butter, egg, vanilla and salt. Using a potato masher, combine the ingredients and mash until mostly smooth. Small lumps are okay. Transfer the potato mixture to the prepared baking dish.
4. In a separate bowl, combine the brown sugar, pecans, flour, cinnamon and nutmeg. Stir together to combine. Pour the melted butter into the brown sugar mixture, and stir until crumbly. Sprinkle the pecan crumble evenly over the top of the potatoes, covering completely. Garnish with some pecan halves, if desired. Cover the baking dish loosely with foil.
5. Bake, covered, at 350 degrees for 35 minutes. Remove the foil and bake for another 10 minutes to allow the pecans to toast. (Total bake time is 45 minutes.)
6. Remove from oven and let cool slightly before serving. Enjoy!

Recipe Source: *delightfulemade.com*

Scan for additional recipe notes

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.

JANUARY 2024

Instructor Tim Pull will cover the 2024 National Electrical Code (NEC) changes and other important NEC rules. 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:

Wednesday, January 10, 2024
Fargo Holiday Inn
3803 13th Avenue South
Fargo, ND

Thursday, January 11, 2024
Fargo Holiday Inn
3803 13th Avenue South
Fargo, ND

Thursday, January 18, 2024
Bemidji Eagles Club
1270 Neilson Avenue SE
Bemidji, MN

Tuesday, January 23, 2024
Bigwood Event Center
921 Western Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN

Tuesday, January 30, 2024
Minnkota Power Cooperative
5301 32nd Avenue South
Grand Forks, ND

Wednesday, January 31, 2024
Minnkota Power Cooperative
5301 32nd Avenue South
Grand Forks, ND

This marks the 36th 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 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 email any questions to **contractortraining@minnkota.com**.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

- **7:15 - 8 a.m.** Sign-in
- **8 a.m. - noon** Workshop
- **Noon - 1 p.m.** Lunch provided
- **1 - 5 p.m.** Workshop continues

$80 REGISTRATION FEE

Electric co-ops give thanks

This Thanksgiving season, your team at Red Lake Electric Cooperative is bursting with gratitude. As we reflect on all of the things that make us the best electric co-op we can be, it's difficult to pare down that endless list of thanks to a top five. But we think we did it, and we want to share that appreciation with you!

Red Lake Electric Cooperative is thankful for...

Our local communities

We live in the same communities we serve, and that makes them pretty special in our book. We not only electrify your town, but also the small towns that neighbor yours. Over decades of service, we get to know what makes all those communities tick, and we try to help support their goals and projects in any way we can – because it's home!

New technology

The latest advances in the equipment and software that make electricity possible are astounding. Our lineworkers are able to work more safely with high-tech trucks and gear. Our power operators can monitor and maintain the grid with smarter systems. And our member services team can act more efficiently with new digital tools to connect with our member-consumers. Technology makes your co-op better year-over-year!

Our employees

We couldn't provide electricity without a whole team of people with talents in varied fields, from electricians and mechanics to accountants and engineers. They may all be trained (24446 Bryan K Grove) for different jobs at the co-op, but they all share one thing in common: They care about the work and hold cooperative values of safety, service and integrity dear to their hearts.

Resource diversity and responsibility

The power mix that we receive from Minnkota Power Cooperative is reliable and resilient thanks to its baseload coal plant. That energy is combined with the renewable, carbon-free power of wind and hydro. Minnkota is also pursuing a carbon capture project on its coal-based power plant, which would make our system one of the fastest decarbonizing grids in the nation!

You

Above all else, your co-op is thankful for you, the member. You vote for your board of directors and advocate for what you want in a co-op. You're patient when there's an issue, and you support us by attending the annual meeting and saying hi at community events. You provide the finances we need to keep power flowing, knowing that money won't end up in shareholders' pockets. You are more than a member of the co-op – you're a member of the family.

Happy Thanksgiving from Red Lake Electric Cooperative!

FIVE WAYS TO SAFEGUARD YOUR HOME THIS WINTER

As the temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, there's a natural inclination to create a warm and cozy haven at home. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles and electrical items, the number of home fires tends to increase during winter months.

Here are five ways you can safeguard your home for the winter season.

ENSURE CARBON MONOXIDE AND SMOKE DETECTORS ARE WORKING PROPERLY.

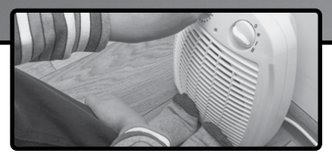
If your detectors are battery-operated, replace the batteries annually. Test the detectors once a month and give them a good dusting to ensure the sensors are clear of dirt and debris.

PRACTICE SAFETY IN THE KITCHEN.

As we spend more time in the kitchen during the holiday season, be mindful of potential fire hazards. Never leave food that's cooking on the stovetop unattended. Clean and remove spilled foods from cooking surfaces and be mindful of where you place flammable items like dish towels.

AVOID OVERLOADING ELECTRICAL OUTLETS AND POWER STRIPS.

When overloaded with electrical items, outlets and power strips can overheat and catch fire. If you use power strips for multiple devices, make sure the strip (27776 Fred A Sorensen III) can handle the electrical load. For a safer bet, look for power strips that include surge protection.



INSPECT ELECTRICAL CORDS.

We depend on more cords during winter, whether for holiday lighting, extension cords or portable heaters. Before using any corded items, double check to make sure cords aren't frayed or cracked. If you use portable space heaters, remember to keep them at least 3 feet away from flammable items. Use models that include an auto shut-off feature and overheat protection. Space heaters can take a toll on your energy bills. Use them efficiently (to heat smaller spaces) and safely. Never plug a space heater into a power strip.

CLEAN THE FIREPLACE TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY.

There's nothing better than a warm fire on a chilly night, but it's important to maintain your fireplace for safety. As wood burns, a sticky substance known as creosote builds up in the chimney. When creosote buildup becomes too thick, a chimney fire can ignite. The chimney should be cleaned at least once a year to reduce fire risks. Regular cleaning also improves air flow and limits the amount of carbon monoxide that seeps indoors.

Red Lake Electric Cooperative wants you and your family to stay safe during the winter season. Visit **redlakeelectric.com** for additional safety tips.

The Power of **SmartHub**

smart hub

See your daily and monthly usage, pay/view your bill online, and utilize a whole host of other useful services with SmartHub. SmartHub is a free and secure online energy portal.

Go to **redlakeelectric.com** and experience the power of SmartHub today!

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.

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 (22990 Duane Browning) 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.

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: 218-796-5175

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 and West Marshall Counties
218-281-9080
Toll-free: 1-866-264-3729
Fax: 218-281-0705

Red Lake Community Action Agency
Red Lake, MN
Serves Beltrami County
218-679-1880

Red Lake Electric Cooperative

FIVE ELECTRIC *Ways to Warm*

The cold has finally slipped into the region, so you've likely had a chance to try out your heating system for the season. Now is a good opportunity to ask yourself these questions:

- **Am I warm enough?**
- **Am I worried about volatile propane/fuel oil prices?**
- **Are there ways I can save money on heating?**
- **Could I be more energy efficient?**
- **Is it time for smarter technology?**

If you wavered for a moment on any of these questions, it may be time to start researching off-peak electric heating options. Red Lake Electric Cooperative has put together a list of our most popular electric heating options to make that search a little easier. Visit ValueOfElectricity.com to learn more!

ELECTRIC TECHNOLOGY	HOW IT WORKS	SAVINGS INCENTIVES
Air-source heat pump	Unlike a furnace, an air-source heat pump (ASHP) doesn't burn fuel to make heat. It simply uses electricity to move heat from one place to another. A standard ASHP is a self-contained system that uses existing ductwork. The system (30593 Krystal L Carlson) is composed of an outdoor compressor unit and an indoor air handling unit.	Rebate of **$300/ton** *(or more)* Eligible for **low off-peak rate**
Mini-split heat pump	Similar to an ASHP, a mini-split heat pump is run by a compressor unit placed outside of your home – but it doesn't need ductwork. The unit is connected to an indoor unit by small cables and a refrigerant line. The indoor unit is typically mounted in the room that is being heated.	Rebate of **$300/ton** *(or more)* Eligible for **low off-peak rate**
Thermal storage heater	Electric thermal storage heaters convert off-peak electricity to heat and store this low-cost heat to keep a home comfortable all day. The system contains electric heating elements that lie within specially designed, high-density ceramic bricks. When the room thermostat calls for heat, it is extracted from the unit's storage core and distributed evenly in the home.	Rebate of **$75/kW** Eligible for **low off-peak rate**
Underfloor storage heating	Underfloor heating has quickly become a favorite (20400 Verna A Flaten) for those seeking ease and comfort on chilly days. The system can be installed at construction or during renovation. Warmth rises from the floor and spreads evenly through a room, garage or shop building.	Rebate of **$25-75/kW** *(dependent on radiant or slab)* Eligible for **low off-peak rate**
Electric plenum heater	Easily adapted to an existing fuel oil or gas/propane forced-air system, a plenum heater uses your existing furnace fan to move air across the plenum heater elements to heat your home. Both your fossil fuel furnace and the electric plenum heater use the same thermostat and ductwork. In most cases, a plenum heater can be installed in conjunction with an air-source heat pump.	Rebate of **$50/kW** Eligible for **low off-peak rate**

VALUE OF ELECTRICITY

Please contact us to learn more about program restrictions and additional rebates!