

# 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*



## 88<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

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Secretary-Treasurer ..... Colette Kujava  
Directors ..... Cecil Anderson,  
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Lars Dyrud, Aaron Enge, Krist Olson  
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*Steve Conely* ..... Manager of Electric System Operations  
*Kelli Brateng* ..... Manager of Member Services  
*Christie Klipping* ... Manager of Finance & Admin.

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**MINNESOTA STATE  
ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS**

Pennington and Marshall Counties:  
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**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](http://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.*



**Annual meeting recap;  
be safe during fieldwork**

by Rich Whitcomb, CEO

I enjoyed visiting with members and guests at your cooperative's 88<sup>th</sup> annual meeting last month at the Legacy Event Center in Thief River Falls. Good food, good location and good fellowship lends itself to an enjoyable meeting.

While the first part of the meeting focused on your cooperative's new management alliance and its focus on immediate cost-savings, Minnkota's presentation regarding wholesale power did generate good questions from those in attendance. Members asked Marcy Douglas, Executive Vice President of External Affairs and Member Services, about different types of power generation sources and the data mining campus being built near Harwood, North Dakota, among other things.

These questions were likely spurred by her presentation that included updates on a potential natural gas power station (27216 Scott Fynboh) in eastern North Dakota and the data center Applied Digital is building in Cass County Electric's service territory (Minnkota Power Cooperative also supplies wholesale energy to that cooperative).

Just to make a couple of quick points that are pertinent to

the conversation – if Minnkota builds a natural gas plant, it would be to provide power to its legacy members (you and me). Natural gas helps diversify its existing fleet of generation that serves you (coal, wind, water) and especially complements wind power (31439 Scott P Berger) by being able to ramp up quickly as wind ramps down.

As for Applied Digital, it is paying 100% of the upfront costs necessary and will also pay for directly relatable transmission upgrades in the region. That distinction matters because Minnkota and other generation and transmission utilities all provide power to the same Midwestern wholesale power market.

So, while your cooperative is located 100 miles from the Fargo area, those are two developments worth watching.

Finally, with everyone excited to get outside and in the fields, please remember safety around overhead power lines and distribution equipment. In other words, "Watch the Wires" – a campaign slogan your cooperative and other local co-ops have been promoting to raise awareness of electrical safety. You can find more information at [watchthewires.com](http://watchthewires.com).



**THEIR COMMUNITY** knows them for their pole climbing skills, their bucket trucks, their hard hats.

**THEIR COWORKERS** know them for their selflessness, their courage, their resilience in harsh environments.

**THEIR FAMILIES** know them for their muddy boots, their ringing phone during the storm, their suntanned faces.

**HOWEVER YOU KNOW THEM - TAKE TIME TO THANK A LINEMAN TODAY.**

**Lineworker Appreciation Day  
Monday, April 13**

**YOU HAVE THE POWER TO...**



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- View and pay your bills online.
- Compare energy use to changes in temperature.
- View daily and monthly energy use.



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For **1 cent** of electricity, your porch lights illuminate the kids dancing in post-rain puddles.



For **10 cents** more, you can wash the muddy clothes after they are done.

**THAT'S THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY**

\*Based on average household energy usage

# 88<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

The 88<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of Red Lake Electric Cooperative was held March 25 at the Legacy Event Center in Thief River Falls. The meeting was attended by approximately 200 cooperative members and guests.

President Peter Mosbeck called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. The meeting was opened with the saying of the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the invocation by Lars Dyrud and introduction of the board of directors and special guest by board president Peter Mosbeck.

The meeting agenda included: approval of 2025 annual meeting minutes and election of directors by Adam Bothun; the CEO's report by Rich Whitcomb; and the financial report by Matt Laughlin, Brady Martz.

Marcy Douglas, Executive Vice President and Chief Member & External Affairs Officer for Minnkota Power Cooperative, presented to meeting attendees. She focused on power supply planning, with an emphasis (27022 Steve Videen) on providing reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity for the membership. A comparison graph highlighted market volatility between 2015–16 and 2023–24. In 2015–16, the average market price was \$25/MWh, while in 2023–24 there were numerous price spikes reaching \$300/MWh and higher.

The presentation also included discussion of several key initiatives. The Flickertail Wind Farm, a 370-MW project, is scheduled to come online in 2028. In addition, there is potential natural gas development, including a major pipeline project from the Bakken in western North Dakota to the eastern part of the state, with Minnkota actively engaged in the development process.

There was also discussion of the benefits of data centers. Minnkota currently has adequate power supply and transmission resources to serve this load without significant impact on legacy members. While data centers and other large loads are not expected to increase rates, rates may still rise due to other factors. Minnkota is carefully navigating challenges and opportunities.

Mark Hanson was presented with a plaque for his 21 years as a board director.

Annually employees are recognized when surpassing five-year increments of service. This year, Sam Olson, journeyman lineman, was recognized for five years of service.

Door prizes were awarded, and a sit-down meal was provided, catered by Legacy Event Center.

Congratulations to our reelected directors, Bonnie Christians and Jenny Bernier-Linder, and our newly elected director, Aaron Enge. They were elected at the annual meeting and will each serve three-year terms.



Bob Johanning won the \$300 energy credit.



Meeting attendees enjoyed a meal catered by the Legacy Event Center.



Rich Whitcomb, Red Lake CEO, presents Mark Hanson a plaque for his years of service.



Polk County Coordinated Victim Services receives Operation Round Up funds.

## DOOR PRIZE WINNERS

**\$300 Energy Credit**  
Bob Johanning

**\$150 Energy Credit**  
Rodney Leidberg

**\$100 Energy Credit**  
Farrah Benitt

**\$75 Energy Credit**  
Bob Schmitz

**\$75 Energy Credit**  
Luther Kaushagen

**\$75 Energy Credit**  
Leo Schmitz

**Milwaukee Spotlight**  
Warren Hermreck

**Flower Pot Set & Soil**  
Ben Meyer

**Shop Vac**  
Jason Bitzer

## DIRECTORS ELECTED TO RED LAKE'S BOARD



**Bonnie Christians**  
District 1



**Jenny Bernier-Linder**  
District 4



**Aaron Enge**  
District 5



# Operation Round Up<sup>®</sup> grants total \$12,300



The Red Lake Electric Trust board met recently and awarded 29 grants to area nonprofit and community organizations that totaled \$12,300. Since its inception in 1993, 1,173 Operation Round Up grants totaling \$722,000 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, almost 97% of Red Lake Electric's members voluntarily "round up" their monthly bill for the Operation Round Up program.

The following five organizations were awarded Round Up funds to help the disadvantaged:

- **Red Lake County Victim Services:** \$500 to help victim emergency expenses.
- **Polk County Coordinated Victim Services:** \$250 to help care for canine services for Silas, victim support dog.
- **Prairie Community Services:** \$300 to enhance quality of life for adults with mental or developmental disabilities.
- **Pennington County Crime Victim Services:** \$500 to help victim emergency expenses.
- **Falls DAC (TRF):** \$300 to help purchase a massage chair for client and staff use.

Four area emergency service providers were given grants:

- **Red Lake Falls Volunteer Ambulance Service:** \$1,000 to help purchase equipment bags and pagers for crew members.
- **Oklee Fire Department:** \$1,000 to help purchase light bars on main pumper truck.
- **Newfolden Volunteer Fire Department:** \$1,000 to help purchase a storage container for training purposes.
- **Goodridge Area Fire and Rescue:** \$1,000 to help cover repair of pumper truck.

One grant was given to a historical organization:

- **Marshall County Area Historical Society:** \$250 to help purchase professional book scanner and platform equipment to digitize historical items.

Eight grants to benefit the general public were awarded to:

- **NCH Trails to Treatments:** \$1,000 to help those affected by cancer in our area with out-of-pocket expenses and supply grants.
- **Goodridge Lion Tamers:** \$250 to help purchase a new water heater and refrigerator for the hall.
- **Goodridge Lions Club:** \$250 to help update the heating system in the hall.
- **Pennington & Red Lake County Public Health & Home Care:** \$500 to help fund maintenance primary care for patients in Pennington & Red Lake Counties.
- **Aurora Resource Center:** \$250 to help support women, children and infants through education and resources.
- **Riverside Park Playground Renovation:** \$250 to help provide a wheelchair swing for children of all ages and disabilities.
- **Pennington Sportsmen Club:** \$250 to help purchase and install a wheelchair-accessible ramp for the new floating pier.
- **Red Lake Falls Area Swimming Pool Committee:** \$250 to help purchase a pool slide and an accessible chair for the pool.

The following two grants were given focusing on senior care:

- **Tri-Community Living at Home/Block Nurse Program:** \$300 to help fund fitness programs for seniors.
- **Goodridge Senior Citizens Center:** \$500 to help repair/replace windows the senior citizens building.

One grant was given for youth and senior participants:

- **Power of Produce (Crookston):** \$250 to help purchase healthy local produce for youth and seniors at local farmers markets.

The following eight organizations received funds focused on youth programs:

- **TRF Chapter of the MN Deer Hunters Association:** \$300 to help provide a meal and gift to youth during the fall youth day event.
- **Thief River Falls Area Community Theater:** \$250 to help cover youth workshops for acting, singing and dancing.
- **Blazin' Saddles:** \$250 to help cover costs of camps and retreats.
- **Little Brother/Little Sister Program (TRF):** \$250 to help fund mentoring youth programs.
- **Scouting America:** \$250 to support professional staff and offer financial assistance to units or individual scouts.
- **Crookston FFA Alumni and Supporters:** \$300 to help purchase mechanical system for deep winter greenhouse.
- **Discovery Place:** \$250 to give students tools they need to learn and grow such as art supplies.
- **Middle River Veterans Outdoors:** \$300 to fund youth waterfowl hunt in September.

The RLE Trust board of directors determines grants two times per year, in March and September. Serving on the board are Stacy Bierman – President, Thief River Falls; Pamela Vetteson – Vice President, Plummer; Laura Kasprovicz – Secretary/Treasurer, Thief River Falls. Ex-officio directors are Bonnie Christians of Crookston and Rich Whitcomb of Fertile, representing Red Lake Electric Cooperative. Grant applications are available at the Red Lake Electric Cooperative Office or by visiting their website at [www.redlakeelectric.com](http://www.redlakeelectric.com). The next deadline for Operation Round Up grant applications is **Sept. 18, 2026**.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

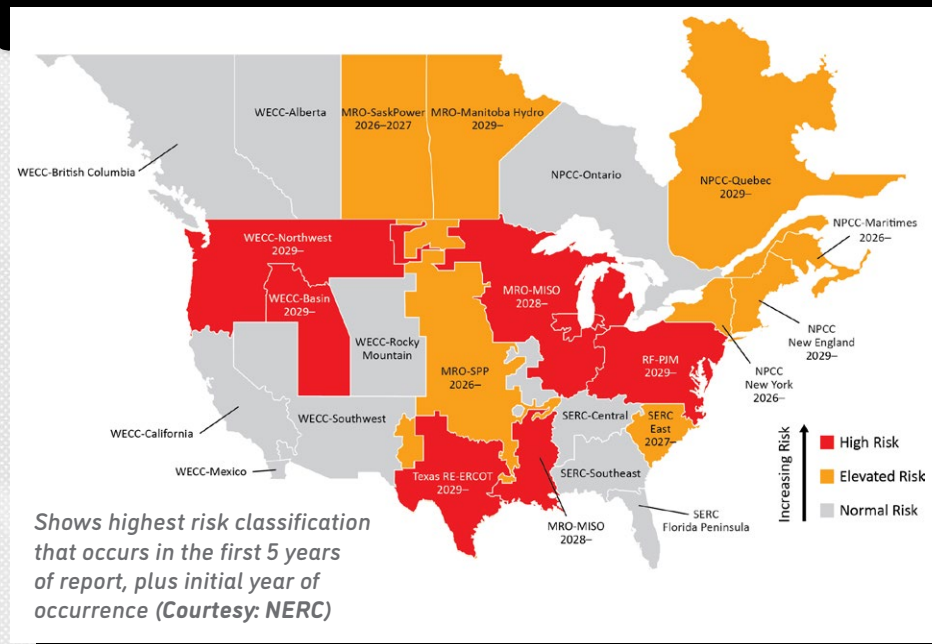
# THE DATA DOESN'T LIE. WE NEED REAL POWER NOW

There's one clear takeaway from the newest Long-Term Reliability Assessment released by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC): The Midwest electric grid that includes Minnkota Power Cooperative and its members needs additional power sources. And soon.

Released this January, the NERC report lists the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) – Minnkota's regional grid operator – as High Risk for energy shortfalls over the next five years. The assessment explains that additional energy resources (30200 Morgan L Holmgren) planned for the region do not keep pace with expected rising electricity demand and the retirement of dispatchable power plants. Although MISO is at Low Risk for energy shortfalls in 2026, the risk elevates in 2027, hitting High Risk in the years 2028-2030.

Summer heat has always been a concern for the grid, as demand can peak quickly as the entire region powers its cooling systems. However, the 2025 assessment highlights increasing winter reliability risks. As demand rises for heating, some energy resources, especially solar and wind, are unable to produce at the same levels as they can in the summer. Because Minnkota employs weather-tested, coal-based power in addition to wind and hydro power, it can navigate cold weather events that may put strain on other utilities.

Potential energy shortfalls across the MISO footprint are not something that Minnkota can correct on its



own. Reliable regional electricity takes the planning and collaboration of multiple utility providers from Canada all the way down to Louisiana. Even though Minnkota has enough generation to meet the needs of its own members, it may be called upon to assist with shortfalls in other areas of MISO. It's crucial that state and federal policy (31202 Corey S Berg) allows utilities to make long-term planning decisions that not only support reliability and affordability for local consumers but also align with the greater reliability needs of the national grid.

Minnkota continues to evaluate its long-term power supply plan with the help of its member cooperatives and neighboring utilities. We understand that reliability is a top priority and we will always advocate for **REAL POWER NOW.**

**LEARN MORE AT  
REALPOWERNOW.COM.**



Scan here to see the full  
**NERC LONG-TERM  
RELIABILITY  
ASSESSMENT**



**RILEY POPPITZ  
ANNOUNCED AS  
2026 YOUTH TOUR  
REPRESENTATIVE**



Red Lake Electric Cooperative is excited to announce Riley Poppitz of Thief River Falls as its Youth Tour representative for 2026. A junior at Lincoln High School, Riley is the daughter of David and Audra Olson. She will join hundreds of high school students representing their cooperatives on an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 15-20.

Kelli Brateng, Member Services Manager for Red Lake Electric Cooperative, expressed excitement about Riley's opportunity to engage with the legislative process firsthand. "The Youth Tour not only offers educational benefits but also provides a platform for students to build lasting friendships and develop leadership skills," Brateng said.

Participants will undergo leadership training, learn more about electric cooperatives, interact with U.S. Representatives and Senators, and explore Washington, D.C.'s memorials and museums.

For over 58 years, the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has empowered high school students to explore the nation's capital and gain valuable insights into the cooperative movement. Selection for this esteemed program is conducted by local electric cooperatives, serving as a shining example of the cooperative principles of commitment to community and youth education.

Congratulations and best wishes for an enriching experience!

## 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.



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

## COWBOY PASTA SALAD

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 taco seasoning packet
- 12 ounces bowtie or rotini pasta (uncooked)
- 8.75 ounces canned corn (1 can), drained
- 15 ounces black beans (1 can), drained and rinsed
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes (halved)
- 8 ounces cheddar cheese (cubed)
- ½ red onion (diced)
- 1 green bell pepper (chopped)
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup barbecue sauce
- 1 Tablespoon spicy brown mustard
- 2 teaspoons hot sauce

### INSTRUCTIONS

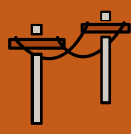
1. Cook the bowtie or rotini pasta according to package directions. Drain and cool.
2. In a skillet over medium heat, brown the ground beef with taco seasoning and black beans until fully cooked. Drain excess grease and let cool.
3. In a bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, barbecue sauce, spicy brown mustard and hot sauce to create the dressing.
4. In a large mixing bowl, combine pasta, beef mixture, corn, cherry tomatoes, cheese, onion and bell pepper.
5. Pour the dressing over the salad and gently mix until well coated.
6. Serve immediately or chill in the fridge for enhanced flavors.

# APRIL IS NATIONAL SAFE DIGGING MONTH

You never know what is hiding below the ground. **ALWAYS remember to call 8-1-1** before you start your next construction, renovation or yard project.



## WHAT COULD BE UNDERGROUND?



Electrical power lines



Water lines



Internet and cable lines



Gas lines

## WHY SHOULD YOU CALL 8-1-1?

1

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