

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



A GREENHOUSE
OF MANY COLORS

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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.



Odds and ends

by Rich Whitcomb, CEO

The summer construction swing is fully underway as your cooperative's crew builds new services, starts reliability enhancement projects and performs general work to keep the distribution system strong.

Please let us know if you have a new service request, have built a new approach for farming that may present a clearance issue, or have a question on pole placement, etc., because we operate within a compressed season for getting these projects done efficiently and safely.

Building update

If you've driven by the new building in Red Lake Falls recently, you'll likely notice that progress has accelerated. The building shell is much more finished, contractors are working on the interior offices and the parking lot (29528 Chelsey Huttleston) is taking shape. A late December move-in date remains the target. The 30,000-square-foot facility will provide a safe, secure and efficient environment for employees, bucket trucks and other important equipment. The total project cost is expected to be \$12.5 million.

Electronic preparedness during storms

Despite the best efforts of utilities, surges and low voltage can still occur for a variety of reasons, especially lightning from summer storms.

While surges and low voltage are rare, they can damage sensitive electronic equipment. Two examples of these types of events are:

- A lightning strike to a power pole sends a surge in voltage through the power lines.
- A vehicle hits a power pole, knocking down one phase on a three-phase feeder, causing low voltage.

Your cooperative does have lightning arresters throughout its system to help absorb any lightning hits. However, here are three items to consider installing to help protect against a surge or low-voltage event:

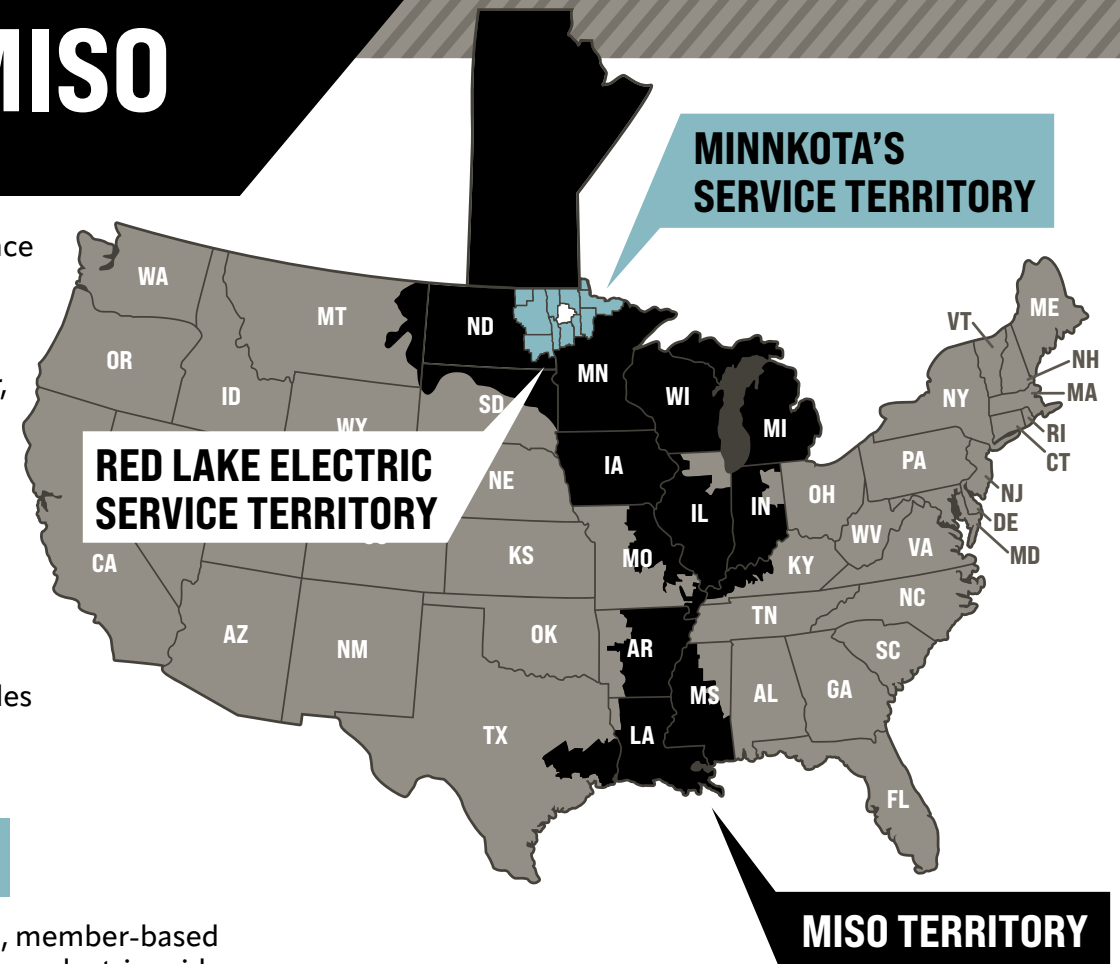
- **Turn off and disconnect sensitive equipment as quickly as possible.** Doing so is the best (21510 Bonita L Johnson) defense during a low- or high-voltage incident.
- **Purchase surge protectors.** These devices, while no guarantee, help protect electrical equipment against voltage spikes. Consumers can either purchase whole-house surge protection from an electrician or surge protectors for individual equipment like TVs and computers. Whole-house surge protectors in combination with point of use surge protectors work the best. Surge protectors work by absorbing some of the electric surge and diverting the rest to ground. Look for UL-listed products that are listed to a certain standard.
- **Install an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) system.** UPS systems are powered by batteries and provide time for the user to save or shut off items they have on a computer correctly. These devices should be hooked up to surge protectors as well. Some UPS systems provide protection against voltage sags or spikes for however long they are rated to work. Be sure to look at the instructions to see if the UPS has those capabilities.

Acts of nature like lightning strikes are not covered by many insurance policies. It is a good idea to check your homeowner's insurance policy to see what is covered and ask for advice on protecting sensitive electronic equipment.

Only in the case of negligence would Red Lake Electric Cooperative's insurance be liable to pay for damage to a member's property.

MEET MISO

We occasionally reference the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) in the pages of this newsletter, because MISO is an important partner in making sure our co-op has the reliable, affordable electricity it needs. We thought we'd take a moment to introduce you to MISO and the service it provides to our regional grid.



What is MISO?

MISO is a not-for-profit, member-based organization that oversees electric grid operations in the middle of the country, with a territory that extends from Manitoba, Canada, through 15 U.S. states down to Louisiana. Its grid footprint serves more than 45 million people through 79,000 miles of transmission power line.

Red Lake Electric's energy provider, Minnkota Power Cooperative, participates in the MISO wholesale energy market to both sell and buy surplus power to and from other utilities. Simply said, when Minnkota needs more power, it can purchase some from its neighbors. If it has extra power, it can sell it to those who need it. MISO makes sure the grid remains balanced between the sales of more than 550 market participants.

MISO also plays a role in helping to plan future regional generation and transmission additions. Although MISO doesn't own any generation or transmission infrastructure, their team helps guide utilities to ensure that the right amount of energy is (30954 Tanner Wellman) being produced to cover the demand of the entire region, and that transmission capacity is adequate to get power where it needs to be.

MISO's role in balancing the grid

Like an air traffic controller manages the movement of airplanes from different airports, MISO manages the movement of energy from different utilities and generation sources.

If there is a problem on the grid, such as a failure at a power plant or a damaged transmission line, MISO must assess whether electricity supply can still meet demand. They may ask generators to ramp up production or ask utilities to reduce load by using demand response programs or asking the public to conserve. In rare emergency cases, they may call upon utilities to implement controlled temporary outages on noncritical loads. Even if a utility like Minnkota has enough generation to meet the load of its own members, emergencies in other areas of the country could impact MISO's requests in our region.

Want to learn more about MISO? Visit misoenergy.org.

A GREENHOUSE OF MANY COLORS

Red Lake Electric business member Klasen's Greenhouse grows joy every season

Thirteen miles north of Thief River Falls, Minnesota, magic is happening under the cover of nine transparent tunnels. Bright flowers, hearty foliage and other unique flora burst to life at Klasen's Greenhouse, a blooming family-owned business just east of the small town of Holt.

Established by native Minnesotans Kade and Ricki Klasen, the rural oasis has captured the attention of not only locals but plant lovers from across Minnesota and North Dakota. Klasen's carries thousands of varieties of flowers, fruits and vegetables, herbs, ornamental grasses and trees, but the greenhouse is just the

start of the attraction. Since they opened their doors to the public in 2019, the Klasens have expanded their business to include a full you-pick flower farm, landscaping services, and seasonal events and attractions.

It all started with a seedling of an idea in 2018, when Kade was searching for a greenhouse to extend the growing season of their country garden.

"We ended up seeing a greenhouse for sale online. I went and looked at it and the guy said there were two left out of the seven or eight he had. He said, 'If you want

to start a greenhouse business, I'd help you.' And I'm like, 'Oh, sounds cool. Let's do it,'" Kade recalled with a chuckle. "I called Ricki on my way home and told her, 'Just so you know, I bought two greenhouses, and we're starting a business.'"

Ricki smiled in return. "We definitely never imagined we would end up where we are now."

Over the next few years, the Klasens continued to add structures until they were overseeing seven greenhouses, while still maintaining their regular jobs teaching kindergarten (Ricki) and working summer construction (Kade). But in 2024, the couple planted themselves fully into the business. That's when they added a flower farm and landscaping services.

Now that they were all in, they wanted to do even more – not just for themselves, but for the community. In 2025, they expanded to include two more greenhouses and a large central building. They also added a pumpkin patch for fall family fun and a life-size Christmas Village for holiday outings.

"People really like that they don't have to travel so far to do things with their families," Ricki said. "We have three kids, too, and when we were trying to take our kids places, we'd have to drive so far to get to any of those activities. We wanted to bring more things local."

The positive feedback doesn't stop with local customers. The Klasens describe reaping the rewards of an uptick in agritourism and "greenhouse hopping," a phenomenon that brings visitors from as far as the Twin Cities and Duluth.

"They just show up to see what we have," Kade said. "We have a really wide variety and carry a lot of options compared to most greenhouses. We start a lot from seeds, so that gives us a lot of options of what we can grow that other places don't."

The Klasens also offer ways for green thumbs to connect with them from afar. The duo actively shares photos and videos from the greenhouse across Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest and YouTube, and Ricki just kicked off a new how-to podcast this spring, called The Garden Gamble. She notes that people often ask if she misses teaching through social media with tutorials, and I host a lot of classes," she said. "So rather than six-year-old kindergartners, I'm just teaching grownups in the community."

As demand increases at Klasen's Greenhouse, so do the business's needs. The staff has grown from just Kade and Ricki to three full-time employees and up to 25 seasonal workers to make sure

all the plants are cared for and projects are covered. Red Lake Electric Cooperative also served as a helping hand when the electric service needed to be adjusted for the growing business.

"We heat with propane, but we cool with electricity," Ricki said, explaining that many plants need to be kept at a certain temperature to properly harden. "The big fans take a lot of power to cool."

Reliable power is important across all seasons at Klasen's Greenhouse. While the plants need a cool breeze in the summer, holiday lights are essential for an unforgettable winter wonderland. Every piece – from tulip bulbs to light-bulbs – plays a role in making this small business a family tradition.

"Our slogan now is 'Growing Memories for Every Season.' I love that we get to see the customers come out for each season of the year. We'll see them in the spring shopping, again at the pumpkin patch, and they bring their kids back for the Christmas Village," Ricki said. "I like that part of it for the sense of community it builds."



Kade Klasen assists with the daily watering at Klasen's Greenhouse.

LOCATION

28572 140th Ave NE
Holt, MN 56738

SPRING HOURS

9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
(every day)

Ricki Klasen tends to the flowers during the busy days just following Mother's Day.

TREES AND POWER LINES DON'T MIX



We're proud of our trees in the Upper Midwest. They shelter our crops from wind and create shade in the summer heat. Knowing how to properly plant and care for trees and other vegetation is important not only for the plants themselves, but also for the safety and reliability of nearby power lines.

When it comes to trees, it's always important to **WATCH THE WIRES**.

YOUR CO-OP'S VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

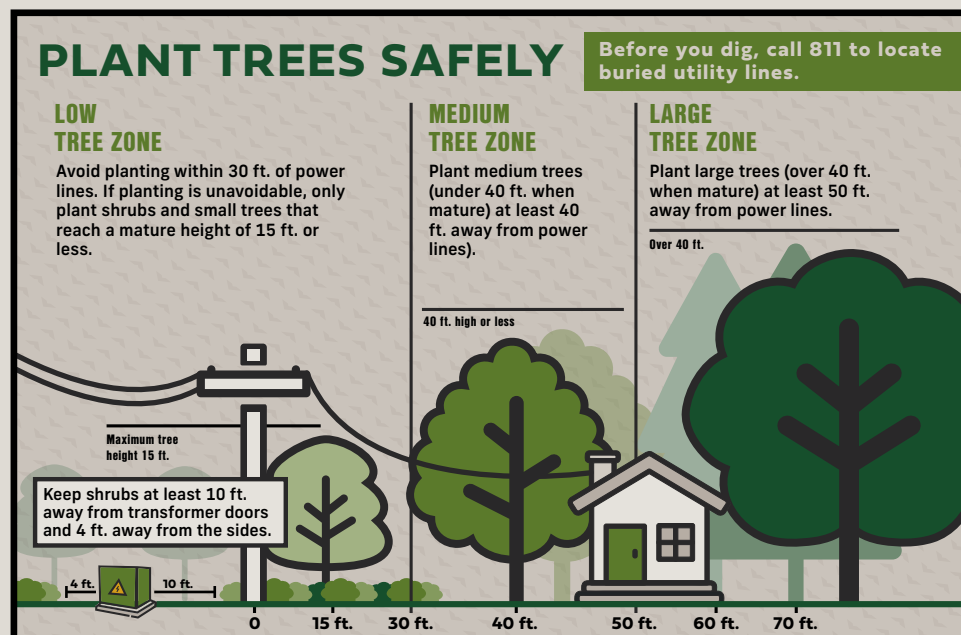
In collaboration with our wholesale power provider, Minnkota Power Cooperative, Red Lake Electric Cooperative uses an integrated approach to vegetation management that supports sustainable plant growth while discouraging plants (30341 Katy E Chapman) that pose safety and security concerns – like tall trees that grow into (or fall into) power lines. We monitor and maintain growth around our lines to meet regulatory and environmental compliance requirements. Some of the procedures we use include:

- ▶ Tree pruning
- ▶ Tree removal (if necessary)
- ▶ Mowing
- ▶ EPA-approved herbicide application

We must keep our right-of-way corridors (the area beneath and to either side of the power line) clear of hazardous vegetation for two important reasons: **SAFETY** and **RELIABILITY**. Improperly maintained trees and plants can spark fires, create power outages or hinder crews from making emergency repairs. If you're a landowner, don't trim or remove tree limbs if they are anywhere near power lines. If you believe a tree is growing too close to a line (21863 Jason R Hruby) and could be a hazard, please give us a call right away.

PLANTING RESPONSIBILITY

Power lines move in certain conditions – they sag on hot days and sway in the wind. Nearby trees must be planned and maintained accordingly. Before planting, consider mature size and crown spread of trees. The clearance distances required for power lines vary depending on line voltage – the higher the voltage, the greater the required clearance distance. If you're unsure, don't hesitate to give your co-op a call.



LEARN MORE AT WATCHTHEWIRES.COM

For **2 cents**, your standing fan keeps the cool air moving while you hide out from the heat.

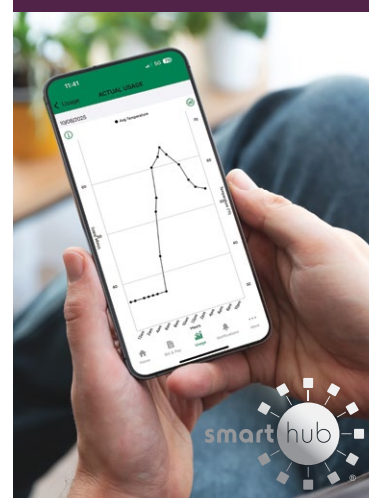


For **10 cents** more, you can keep your favorite popsicle flavors frozen and ready for additional chill.



THAT'S THE  VALUE OF ELECTRICITY

*Based on average household energy usage



YOU HAVE THE POWER TO...

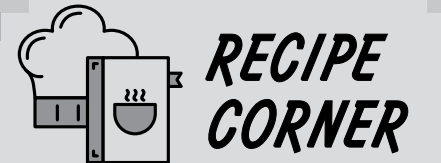
- Go paperless and receive an email notice when your bill is ready to view.
- Compare energy use to changes in temperature.
- View and pay your bills online.
- View daily and monthly energy use.

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

SIGN UP FOR SMARTHUB:
REDLAKEELECTRIC.COM

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 (99999999 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 or mail to: Red Lake Electric Cooperative, PO Box 430, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750-0430.

RHUBARB DREAM BARS

INGREDIENTS

For the Crust

- 1 cup butter, salted
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup powdered sugar

For the Filling

- 4 large eggs
- 2 cups granulated white sugar
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp. salt
- 4 cups rhubarb, diced

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Melt the butter and mix with the flour and powdered sugar.
3. Press into a 9x13-inch pan.
4. Bake in the preheated oven for 10 minutes. Take it out of the oven.
5. In a large bowl, beat the eggs and slowly add the sugar, flour and salt.
6. Fold in the diced rhubarb.
7. Pour on top of the crust and bake for another 45 minutes or until set and nicely browned on top.
8. Allow to cool completely before cutting into bars for easier slicing.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A SUMMER STORM

In June of 2025, North Dakota and Minnesota were hit by a system of devastating storms that impacted the critical power infrastructure of the region. Between lightning, tornadoes and sustained winds, power poles and trees snapped like toothpicks, leaving hundreds of people across many miles (29069 Kyle Qualley) without electricity. It took a lot of helping hands to restore power.

These storms left many homes and businesses without electricity for an extended period of time. In hot and humid conditions, it's important to have a plan for when the unexpected occurs. Your trusted local electric co-op is here to remind you about what to do to prepare for summer storms and outages.

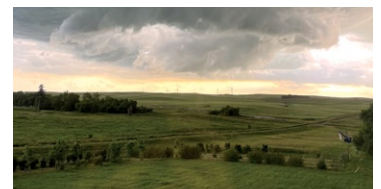
BEFORE THE STORM

- Create a plan with your family about what to do if there is a severe storm and power goes out
- Charge phones and power banks
- If you need power for life-saving equipment, sump pumps or other critical items, ensure you have a backup battery or generator
- Build a kit of supplies for your family including:
 - Lots of water
 - Nonperishable foods
 - First-aid kit
 - Flashlight with extra batteries
 - Medications



DURING THE STORM

- Move to an interior, windowless room
- Monitor the local news and weather stations
- Avoid using corded, electrical appliances
- **DO NOT IGNORE EMERGENCY SAFETY MESSAGES**



AFTER THE STORM

- Keep children and pets away from any debris or floodwater
- If you have water in your basement, do not step into it if it could be energized by outlets or plugged-in appliances
- Check your surroundings and report any downed power lines and power outages
- Report power outages to (218) 253-2200

