

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

DL EC
RLEC

JULY/AUGUST 2026



Red Lake Electric linemen lift overhead power lines as a shipping container makes its way to Northern Canada after arriving by ship in Duluth. The trailer has 48 tires and the container weighs approximately 500,000 pounds.

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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.



Data centers and electric rates

by Rich Whitcomb, CEO

While your cooperative does not currently serve a large-scale data center, or any data center for that manner, I wanted to spend this month's column discussing the potential positive impact a data center could have on your future electric rates.

This topic is pertinent because we are all aware that Applied Digital is building a large data center with Oracle as its core tenant just across the Red River in Harwood, North Dakota. Since we share the same wholesale power supplier, Minnkota Power Cooperative, as Cass County Electric Cooperative, which will provide power to the load, there will be potential secondary effects here as well.

Like most things, if the terms are structured thoughtfully and its effects on the transmission and generation of electricity are studied carefully, responsible development can actually help keep electric rates stable. We believe this to be the case with this situation for a few reasons.

First, Applied Digital is paying all of the upfront costs for the substation and regional transmission upgrades necessary to connect to the larger and localized transmission grid. These costs are significant – in the tens of millions of dollars.

Second, there are benefits here that go toward what we all pay for the existing system through our electric rates. The more a larger load pays into the system, the less pressure there is on "legacy" members to pay for these fixed costs. These contributions can help keep rates stable and lessen the need for future increases.

Third, our wholesale power supplier can now budget for excess energy (kWh) that would have gone into the widely variable wholesale power market, at a set price, which allows a degree of price protection.

Now, the flip side of this coin is that wholesale power rates will still likely go up for other reasons. Pressures from inflation of materials, actually getting supplies, meeting carbon-free mandates, and building more electric generation to replace the aging fleet of assets will exist regardless.

Let's talk about that last part. Minnkota's two coal power plants have been the backbone of its system since 1970 and 1977. Like the rest of us, they are inching closer to retirement age. And like us, thoughtful planning should occur before retirement. Building new 24/7 generation typically takes upwards of 5-7 years, so preparations need to start now. The price tag of new generation to serve existing members, in this case natural gas, will be in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

We are simply nearing the end of a cycle of generation (27007 Russell Gervais) and transmission that started almost six decades before. All utilities must go through this cycle.

With careful planning and risk mitigation, I think we can certainly temper impacts somewhat to continue providing extreme value to our members.

After all, the value of electricity in improving the lives of all of Americans within a generation cannot be overestimated. Along with the Industrial Revolution of the 1800s, its positive overall transformation of society has been truly remarkable.



Construction continues on the Applied Digital data center near Harwood, North Dakota.

AT THE CAPITOL: WORKING TO KEEP YOUR POWER AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE

The 2026 Minnesota legislative session has wrapped up at the Capitol, and there's plenty for cooperative member-owners to know about how the session affected the energy that powers your home, farm or business.

It was a session shaped by divided government. With a tied House, a one-seat Senate majority and an election looming in November, every bill needed bipartisan agreement to move. Even so, Minnesota's electric cooperatives made important progress on the issues that matter most to member-owners. The session (24849 Paul Knott) delivered a meaningful step forward on nuclear energy and stopped several costly proposals before they could become law.

A step forward on nuclear energy

After three decades of standing still, Minnesota took its first real step forward on nuclear energy.

Lawmakers approved a state nuclear energy study, the most significant movement on the issue since Minnesota's nuclear moratorium was put in place in 1994. The moratorium itself remains on the books, but the study reflects a growing recognition at the Capitol that nuclear power deserves a serious look as the state works toward its carbon-free electricity goals.

The study itself will examine the costs, benefits and tradeoffs of nuclear energy in Minnesota, including its potential role in supporting affordability, reliability and emissions reductions.



Its findings will give lawmakers a stronger foundation for deciding whether to lift the moratorium next year.

Holding the line on costly new mandates

Just as important as what passed is what didn't.

Several proposals introduced this session would have added new costs, new mandates or new layers of regulation onto Minnesota's electric cooperatives. None of them became law, and that outcome wasn't an accident.

Throughout the session, Minnesota's electric cooperatives worked to educate legislators about how mandates from St. Paul affect locally governed, not-for-profit cooperatives differently than they

do large investor-owned utilities. Bills touching on solar policy, affordability mandates and utility operations all stalled before reaching the finish line. Cooperative priorities (33354 Michelle M Benton) like net metering reform also saw little movement, leaving important work for future sessions.

That distinction matters because cooperatives are governed by the members they serve. Decisions about your electricity are made by neighbors you can talk to, not regulators in St. Paul. One-size-fits-all mandates often raise costs, undermine that local democracy and add bureaucracy without delivering real benefits to member-owners. Stopping bad policy rarely makes headlines, but it remains critically important to the members we serve.

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 (999999.99 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.

SCHOLARSHIPS

2026 RECIPIENTS

Each year, Red Lake Electric Cooperative provides scholarships for graduating seniors at each of the high schools operating throughout the cooperative’s service area. The recipients are selected by the scholarship selection committee of the recipients’ high schools. There were 21 recipients this year with each student receiving \$500. The funds for these scholarships come from unclaimed capital credits. Congratulations and best wishes to these scholarship recipients!



Chole Boll
Bryan & Melissa Boll
Crookston High School



Josi Cardinal
Darcy & Amanda Cardinal
St. John’s Lutheran School



Miley Cota
Buckly & Stacy Cota
Lafayette High School



Sophia Eidsmoe
Javen & Andrea Eidsmoe
Lincoln High School



Mollie Bohnenkamp
John & Bobbie Bohnenkamp
Lincoln High School



Makayla Erlandson
Brady & Bridget Fiedler
Goodridge High School



Kason Hanson
Ehren & Ester Hanson
Lincoln High School



Zeb Hermreck
Gerald & Amanda Hermreck
Lincoln High School



Jordyne Hoglin
Mike Hoglin &
Shannon Abrahamson
Lincoln High School



Sawyer Jacobson
Jenny & Jason Woods
Goodridge High School



Ethan Johnson
JJ Johnson &
Catherine Johnson
Red Lake County Central



Matthew Johnson
Mark & Jane Johnson
Warren-Alvarado-Oslo School



Kylie Klipping
Bob & Casey Klipping
Lafayette High School



Coby Knott
Andy Knott & Lacy Knott
Lafayette High School



Nevaeh Kotrba
Nick & Tanya Kotrba
Goodridge High School



Emma LaPlante
Thomas & Erin LaPlante
Crookston High School



Hailey Leatherwood
Joshua Leatherwood
& Sara Bakke
Lincoln High School



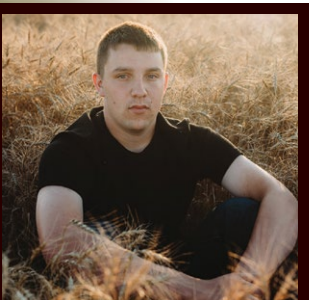
Lillie Lundeen
Perry & Sally Lundeen
Red Lake County Central



Keziah Momerak
Aaron & Sadie Kennard
Marshall County
Central High School



Ellie Underdahl
Cody & Laura Underdahl
Marshall County
Central High School



Logan Vettleson
Lon Vettleson & Katie Arnold
Red Lake County Central

UNCLAIMED CAPITAL CREDITS

The following people may have refunds due to them. Refund checks or allocation letters mailed to their last known address have been returned as undeliverable by the U.S. Postal Service. These former members may contact Red Lake Electric by calling the office at 218-253-2168 or 800-245-6068 or email at info@redlakeelectric.com.

AARESTAD, WENDY M.	FLATEN, DARRELL	LUND, DENNIS D.	ROGGENBUCK, DONALD
ABBOTT, AARON G.	FOSTER, MICHAEL	LUNDON, JOY	ROKKE, KATHRYN
ABRAHAMSON, TIMOTHY J.	FULLER, ERMA HANSEN	LUNDQUIST, BILL J.	ROPPE, LAURA
ANDERSON, SARAH R.	FYHRIE, TROY L.	MACK, JEROME	ROULAND, LYNN G.
ANDERSON, DUANE A.	GALIZIA, DAWN M.	MAGNELL, PENNY	ROZOWSKI, DARCY
ANDERSON, DAWN A.	GARDNER, MEXETTA RUTH	MAGNER, GENE	RUD, KEITH
ANDERSON, KRISTI	GEBUR, LESLIE P.	MAKIN, ROBERT	RUDE, GAIL S.
AUBOL, DUANE	GERARDY, JEREMY M.	MALMANGER, PAUL A.	SANDS, JEFFREY E.
BACON, DAN	GONSHOROWSKI, DARLENE	MANDERUD, IDA	SBA TOWER INC
BAKKEN, MARVIN G.	GOULET, JOY	MARQUIS, MITCHELL	SCHAFER, GLENN
BAKKEN, GILMER	GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH	MARTIN, JAMES	SCHLAGEL, REGGI A.
BASARGIN, VARS	GRANT, FRED P.	MCDONALD, MARK R.	SHEFLAND FLYING SERVICE
BEDA, KELLY OR CHRISTOPHER	GULLIKSON, LYNN	MCKIBBEN, KIMBALL W.	SHEIK, RICHARD D.
BENEDICK, JODY J.	HAHN, MICHAEL OR BARB	MEINE JR, WILLARD D.	SHERWOOD, DAWN M.
BERGERON, CURTIS	HALVORSON, LORETTA	MELVIE, GAYLAN G.	SIMAN, LEORA
BOMAN, DAVID J.	HALVORSON, RODNEY OR YVONNE	MESABA AIRLINES	SKOGSTAD, DENNIS
BORDERS, MICHAEL S.	HAUGEN, TERRY	MEYER, FRANCES	SOARES, ED OR DOROTHY
BORGESON, BONITA	HAYES, JAMES	MEYERS, DANNY	SORDAHL, GAYLEN
BRAUSEN, TOM OR TAMMY	HELM, TERRY	MIDWEST TOWER PARTNERS	SORVIG, TIM OR DEANNA
BRAVO, VIRGINIA	HELM, JESSE	MILLER, BRENDA	SPAULDING, MICHAEL
BRENNAN, SHELLY R.	HENDERSON, DONNA OR CHARLES	MOORE, KATHLEEN	SPENST, BETTY
BRING MORBERG, ANGIE	HENDRICKSON, CHARLES B.	MOSBECK, STEVEN	STARK, CARL
BRISTOW, CAL OR SHIRLEY	HODGSON, JESSE	MURPHY, DEREK	STEN, MARGARET D.
BROWN, DEREK I.	HOFFMAN, JOHN C.	MURRAY, JOHN M.	STENFORS, RUSSELL E.
BURIAN, MARLIS A.	HOLZHAUSER, BRETT OR CINDY	MYERS, AARON OR ROBIN J.	STENNES, BURTON
BUSSE, LEROY	HOUSKER, GARY	NELSON, KURT D.	STENVIK, BRADLEY D.
BUTLER, EARL OR JENNIFER	HUD/FIRST, PRESTON	NEUMAN, JEREMY OR HEATHER	STEPHENS, NATHAN L.
BUTLER, LORRIE A.	HUTCHINSON, AUSTIN	NOEL JR, GEORGE	STOUTENBURGH, JOHN L.
CAMARA, AUNDREA	IHRKE, DARLENE	NORDINE, MIKE OR KATHRYN	STRAND, SHIRLEY
CARLSON, WALTER D.	IRONNECKLACE, MIKE	ODE, WAYNE U.	STREICH, KEITH J.
CARLSON, KIM	IVERSON, KEVIN	OLIPHANT, JON	STUSYNSKI, ADAM
CARLSON, RACHAEL	JANSSEN, JUSTIN	OLSON, EMMA C.	SUNSDAHL, SHARYL
CASAVAN, JENNIFER L.	JENSRUD, DONALD	OLSON, LISA M.	SWANSON, CHARLES
CHAMPAGNE, ROB	JOHNSON, DEAN	OMLID, SID	SWANSON, PEGGY
CONNER, LEONA DENAULT	JOHNSON, SUSIE	OSBJORNSON, SANDRA	SWANSON, BEV A.
CONWAY, JOSHUA	JOHNSON, DAVID L.	PATTERSON, LOUIS	SWENSON HIGHLAND PARTNERS
CRITSER, VERENA	JOHNSON, ERIC B.	PAULSON, RICHARD	SWICK, MYRTLE LOVENA
CURREY, ROLLAND	JOHNSON, JASON L.	PAULSON, CORIANN	THOMPSON, ROGER C.
DAHLIN, DEBRA	JOLLY-WOOD	PAVLISH, CAROLYN	THOMSEN, MADI E.
DAHLIN, DANIEL	JORDE, RICHARD	PERREAULT, CAROL J.	THUNE, ALICE
DALZELL, ROSS OR ANGELA	KETCHUM, COLETTE	PETERSON, KIM	TRULY, DILLON J.
DANIELSON, TODD	KIM, LEONARD C.S.	PETERSON, CORY L.	VANDEHEY, ANNETTE
DEHAAN, BERNADETTE	KINGBIRD, ARIELLA	PETERSON, MARK	VANROOY, MARVEL
DELCASTILLO, NITA	KJELLBERG, PATRICIA	PETERSON, BONITA	VILEN, JOSEPHINE
DELEON, FRANK	KLASEN, LOUISE	PETERSON, JENA M.	WAGNER, DAN
DIAZ, TAMARA M.	KLITZKE, WILLARD	PETERSON, KENNETH	WALLS, JOHN G.
DONARSKI, LEO	KOSTRZEWSKI, DEWAYNE J.	PINKERTON, RICHARD	WARK, MACKENZIE
DORR, ROBERT J.	KRUEGER, SALLY	PINT, RONALD L.	WARNE, RICK
DRECHSEL, JOYCE	KULVIK JR, ALBERT R.	POOLE, LISA M.	WATERWORTH, ANDREW P.
DUPONT, ALLEN L.	LANG, BRENDA	POWELL, MICHAEL A.	WEGGE, DEAN
DURHEIM, MONA R.	LANGAAS, EDWARD L.	PRESTON, JEANETTE	WEILAND, PHILIP M.
ELLISON, JOHN F.	LANKFORD, KEITH	RAKER, THOMAS R.	WELSH, NEIL C.
ENGEN, MARIE	LARSON, MELODY J.	RDR INC.	WHEELER, KEVIN L.
ENGVAL, JIM	LECY, TYREL	REED, PAT A.	WILDE, JARROD OR KARI
ERICKSON, WAYNE OR AMY	LEONA SCHMIDT TRUST	REESE, AMBROSE N.	WILLIQUETTE, MARK
ERICKSON, WAVELL M.	LIEN, JEFF A.	REIMCHE, CHRISTIAN OR JOAN	YOUNGMAN, PAUL
FAIRBANKS, ANTHONY	LINDSTROM, BARBARA J.	RITTER, C. OR ERIC	
FALDET, ALVINA	LIZAKOWSKI, BRAD	RIZUTO, MIKE	
FINKE, GARY R.	LOUKAS, JOHN G.	ROCKWELL, WILFRED R.	



OPERATION ROUND UP® GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Organizations involved in community projects and charities are encouraged to apply for funds from Operation Round Up at this time. Completed grant applications are due in the Red Lake Electric Cooperative (RLEC) office by **Friday, Sept. 25, 2026**.

Operation Round Up is a program adopted by RLEC headquartered in Red Lake Falls. Members choosing to “round up” their monthly electric bill payment provide funds for this effort. Today, 97% of RLEC members now choose to contribute pennies each month to enhance their communities.

Funds will be donated primarily to nonprofit organizations to help fund specific projects or programs. Since the program began in 1993, \$722,371 has been granted to community organizations and charities. Money is donated for the betterment of the community within the outside service (26424 David L Paul) area boundaries of RLEC.

The Red Lake Electric Trust Board of Directors determines grants. Board members are Stacy Bierman, Thief River Falls; Pamela Vettleson, Plummer; Laura Kasproicz, Thief River Falls; Rich Whitcomb, Fertile; and Bonnie Christians, Crookston.

To apply for an Operation Round Up grant, organizations should contact the RLEC office in Red Lake Falls at **218-253-2168** or **800-245-6068**. A short application must be completed and submitted along with a financial statement from the organization.

Grant application forms are available on the cooperative’s website: www.redlakeelectric.com.

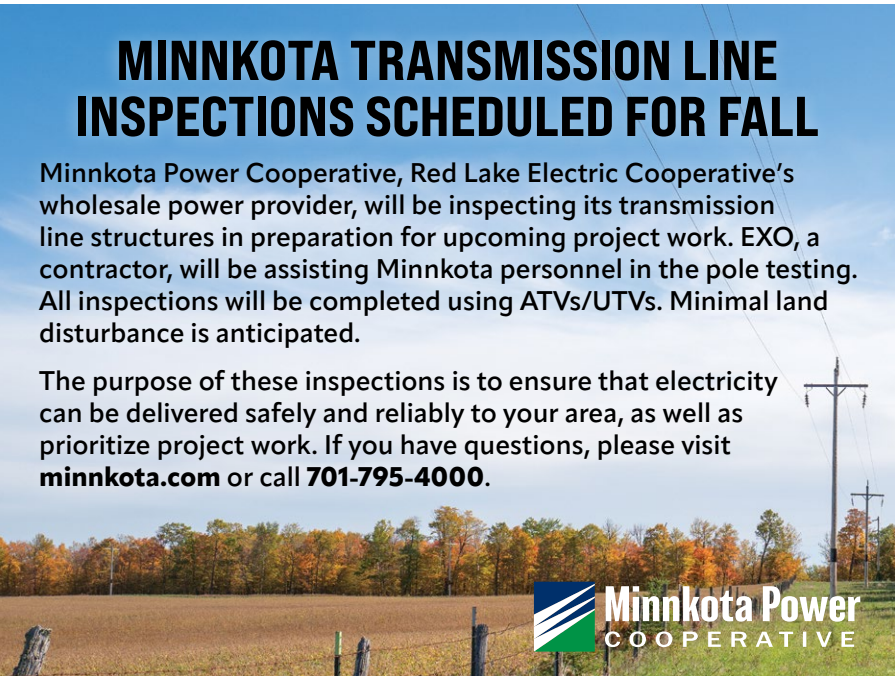
For more information contact **218-253-2168** or **800-245-6068**.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

MINNKOTA TRANSMISSION LINE INSPECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR FALL

Minnkota Power Cooperative, Red Lake Electric Cooperative’s wholesale power provider, will be inspecting its transmission line structures in preparation for upcoming project work. EXO, a contractor, will be assisting Minnkota personnel in the pole testing. All inspections will be completed using ATVs/UTVs. Minimal land disturbance is anticipated.

The purpose of these inspections is to ensure that electricity can be delivered safely and reliably to your area, as well as prioritize project work. If you have questions, please visit minnkota.com or call **701-795-4000**.



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.

LEMON BLUEBERRY CAKE

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup salted butter, softened to room temperature
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1 ¼ cup granulated sugar, divided
- 2 tablespoons fresh-squeezed lemon juice
- 2 large eggs
- 1½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 ¼ teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoons salt
- ½ cup full-fat sour cream
- 2 cups fresh blueberries

INSTRUCTIONS

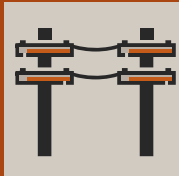
1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9-inch round cake pan (or springform pan) with cooking spray and set aside. If you’d like to completely remove the whole cake from the pan to serve, line the cake pan with parchment paper before adding the cake batter.
2. Place the sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer (or with a large bowl and hand mixer). Zest the lemon overtop the sugar. Use a rubber spatula to press the zest into the sugar, until evenly distributed. Then add the butter. Whip together the butter and 1 cup of the sugar (the other ¼ will go on top) until pale and fluffy, about five minutes.
3. Add the eggs, one at a time, and beat well after each addition. Beat in the lemon (30079 Timothy K Carlson) juice.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt. Gradually add the flour mixture to the butter mixture alternately with sour cream, beginning and ending with flour mixture, mixing just until combined after each addition.
5. Gently fold in the blueberries to the cake batter using a rubber spatula. Spread the batter (33307 Jared W Haack) in the prepared baking pan. Sprinkle the remaining ¼ cup of sugar evenly over the top of the cake batter.
6. Bake 35-40 minutes, until the top is crackly and lightly browned and the center still jiggles just a bit. A toothpick inserted in the center will have moist crumbs.
7. Let the cake cool completely in the pan and then serve.

LEARN BEFORE YOU BURN



There are many benefits to rural controlled burns (also called prescribed burns), from managing crop debris to protecting the soil from disease. However, these burns present real wildfire and electrical risks if handled carelessly. Before you plan a burn, make sure you understand these foundational safety guidelines.

FIRST, WATCH THE WIRES – NEVER BURN NEAR POWER LINES.



Heat, smoke and flames can damage power lines or cause electrical arcing. Smoke can also reduce air insulation and increase the risk of electrical discharge through the air. And if a power pole catches fire, it can continue to burn inside even if the fire looks like it has stopped. Keep a safe distance (24347 Craig Magnell) and notify the co-op if a burn is planned nearby.

KNOW THE SPECIFIC WEATHER AND WIND CONDITIONS.



Burns should only happen under specific conditions: light winds, moderate humidity and no extreme heat. Our region has open landscapes that allow wind to pick up and shift unpredictably. Even a “moderate” 10-15 mph wind can push a grass fire faster than a person can run. If it feels breezy, it’s probably too risky to burn.

GET A PERMIT AND FOLLOW LOCAL REGULATIONS.



In Minnesota, permits are typically required through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and burning is often restricted during spring wildfire season when grasses are dry. In North Dakota, local fire departments or county officials usually issue permission, and burn bans are common during high winds or drought. Always check daily restrictions.

REMEMBER TO PLAN FIREBREAKS BEFORE YOU BURN.



The dominant fuels in North Dakota and Minnesota field burns are grasses and crop residue, which ignite easily and spread fast. Before you burn, create wide, well-maintained firebreaks, like disked soil (20454 Scott Kilen) or wet lines.

HAVE SUPPRESSION TOOLS AND A PLAN READY.



Water sources, hoses, shovels and even tractors should be on hand before starting. More importantly, there needs to be a clear plan for what to do if the fire escapes, including who calls emergency services and how people will respond quickly.



For more power line safety tips, visit watchthewires.com.