



Photo: Char Rustad, June Calendar Photo Contest Winner

# NEWSLETTER

June 2026

## Reducing The Risk Of Wildfires *by Jenny Stryhn, General Manager*

Gone are the days when wildfires were primarily confined to the western United States. Rising temperatures, prolonged drought and shifting weather patterns are creating dangerous conditions in places that historically experienced few major fires. Today, more than 30 states, including Minnesota, face elevated wildfire risk. The reality is clear: wildfire risk is no longer regional—it is national. And it demands action from all of us.

At Agralite Electric Cooperative, protecting our members and the communities we serve is our highest priority. Agralite has developed a Wildfire Mitigation Plan, and I want you to know that wildfire mitigation is not seasonal work for us. It is a year-round commitment embedded in how we operate and invest in our local system.

One of the most important ways we reduce wildfire threats is through our comprehensive vegetation management program. Overgrown trees and power lines are a dangerous combination, particularly during dry and windy conditions. Throughout the year, Agralite, along with our trusted contractors, proactively trim and remove vegetation that could come into contact with power lines and other critical infrastructure. This work requires careful planning, coordination with property owners, and ongoing inspection. While it may not always be visible, it's one of the most effective tools we have to prevent fire ignition and maintain reliable electricity.

In addition to boots on the ground, Agralite is leveraging advanced technology to strengthen our system. We are continuously monitoring equipment performance that alerts us to potential issues before they escalate. Advanced system analytics allow us to detect abnormal conditions

and respond quickly. By investing in these modern technologies, we are shifting from reactive repairs to proactive prevention—identifying risks early and addressing them before they become emergencies.

Wildfire mitigation also requires thoughtful public policy. Managing electric infrastructure in and around public lands can present unique challenges. That is why we support practical, commonsense solutions such as the Fix Our Forests Act, which would streamline the ability of electric cooperatives and other utilities to maintain power lines on federal lands and reduce hazardous “fuel” buildup. Policies that promote responsible land management are an essential part of a comprehensive wildfire prevention strategy. [Article continues on page 2](#)



Reducing the risk of wildfire is a year-round commitment embedded in how we operate and invest in our local system.

## EMPOWERING communities

with innovative and sustainable energy solutions

FOR OVER

# 85 YEARS

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**Agralite Electric Co-op**  
*We're member-owned!*

320 US-12, Benson, MN  
(320) 843-4150  
1-800-950-8375  
[www.agralite.coop](http://www.agralite.coop)

 Like us on Facebook



**Summer Office Hours:**

7:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Closed July 3rd



Touchstone Energy®

Agralite is a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative.



## Find your account number and win a \$100 credit!

If your account number (as it appears on your monthly electric bill) is one of the [four account numbers](#) hidden in this issue, give our office a call by the end of the month and you will receive a \$100 bill credit. If more than one member finds their account number in a single issue, \$100 will be split equally amongst them.

### Congratulations

to Rosanne Olsen for finding her account number in the April newsletter.

### Energy Saving Tip:

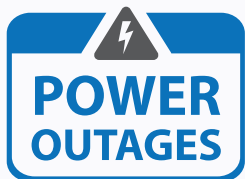


During these warm summer months, a smart thermostat can help keep your home comfortable while reducing cooling costs.

Smart thermostats learn your routine and automatically raise the temperature when you're away and cool things down before you return, avoiding unnecessary energy use. You can also adjust settings remotely from your phone, so you're never cooling an empty house. 1758000

Setting your thermostat a few degrees higher while you're away or asleep can lead to significant savings. Many smart thermostats provide reports and tips, helping you fine-tune your energy and stay cool while keeping your electric bill in check.

Source: energy.gov



## Call Day or Night 1.888.884.3887

[Do not call the office for outages](#)

June Energy Payment is due July 20.\*

\*We accept Visa, Discover, and Mastercard.

## Reducing The Risk Of Wildfires *Continued*

While we are committed to doing our part, wildfire prevention is a shared responsibility. There are important steps each of us can take to protect our homes and neighborhoods. Properly extinguish fires by dousing them with water, stirring the ashes and ensuring they are cool to the touch before leaving the area. Avoid outdoor burning on windy or excessively dry days. 1596600 Maintain a defensible space around your home by clearing dry leaves, dead branches, and other flammable debris. Use lawn equipment carefully, particularly during hot conditions, and always check local regulations for burn bans or restrictions.

Wildfires are becoming more complex and more widespread, but through proactive system management, smart investments, sound policy and community partnership, we can reduce risks and strengthen resilience.

At Agralite Electric Cooperative, we take this responsibility seriously. Our members depend on us not only for reliable power, but for leadership in safeguarding the communities we call home.

## STAY COOL THIS SUMMER without breaking the bank



Summer heat can strain both your comfort and your budget. As temperatures soar and energy demand peaks in the late afternoon and evening, it's time to take action.

### 7 cost effective tips to help lower energy consumption:

1. Request a home energy audit from your local utility to reduce energy loss.
2. Change your air filter regularly to help your HVAC system work efficiently.
3. Increase your thermostat by two degrees and set it to a higher temperature when you're away.
4. Install a smart or programmable thermostat for automatic temperature control.
5. Run dryers, washers and dishwashers during off-peak hours in the early morning or late evening.
6. Wash full loads of laundry in cold water. Detergent, not hot water, cleans the clothes.
7. Reduce indoor heat by limiting cooking and the use of heat-producing appliances during the hottest parts of the day.



## Heat Pumps: What Are They And What Do They Do?

Heat pumps are no longer a brand new technology. They have improved in how well they work (including in colder weather) and offer many more options to homeowners, from ductless mini-splits to high-efficiency, variable-speed systems. If you've heard the term and wondered what a heat pump actually does, here's the simple idea: it doesn't "make" heat like a furnace. It moves heat, which can make it an efficient way to keep your home comfortable year-round.



### What are heat pumps and how do they work?

In general, a heat pump extracts heat from one place and transfers it to another (similar to how an air conditioner or refrigerator cools). In warmer months, a heat pump takes heat from inside a home and relocates it outdoors, helping to make your home cooler. In cooler months, it pulls heat from the outdoor air (even when it feels cold) and transfers it indoors. Some newer models use variable-speed (inverter) compressors that adjust output in small increments for steadier comfort and better efficiency.

### Do they save energy?

Because heat pumps move heat instead of generating it, they can be very efficient—especially when replacing electric resistance heat (like baseboard heaters). The U.S. Department of Energy notes that today's heat pumps can cut electricity use for heating by up to 75% compared with electric resistance heating, though actual savings depend on your climate, home, and the system you're replacing.

Heat pumps for larger homes can save energy with a zone-heating feature, warming only rooms that are in use. 988200 High-efficiency heat pumps also dehumidify better than standard systems, resulting in less energy usage.

### Is there more than one type?

Four primary types of heat pumps exist:

- **Air-to-air or air-source pumps** are the most common and are powered by electricity. They have an outdoor compressor/condenser unit that warms or cools the coils inside the air handler. It then circulates the warmed or cooled air through the system and pushes the air through ducts back into rooms. For homes without air ducts, air-source heat pumps are also available in a ductless version called a mini-split heat pump.
- **Absorption heat pumps** are similar to air-source heat pumps except instead of using electricity to operate, they use alternative energy sources such as natural gas, propane, or solar- or geothermal-heated water.
- **Geothermal/ground source heat pumps** can heat, cool, and even supply hot water to a home by transferring heat to or from the ground (or nearby water source), according to Energy.gov. They have higher install cost, but lower operating costs since they take advantage of relatively constant ground or water temperatures. They are typically more efficient, have steady performance, and can be used in more extreme climates than air-source heat pumps, though air-source technology has improved. Cold-climate air-source heat pumps are now designed to keep providing heat efficiently at temperatures below freezing, making them a realistic option in many northern states.
- **Air-to-water heat pumps** are a special type of air-source heat pump called a "reverse cycle chiller" that generates hot and cold water rather than air, allowing it to be used with radiant floor heating systems.

Article continues on page 4

## TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



Protect your accounts by enabling multi-factor authentication (MFA) wherever possible. MFA adds an extra layer of security by requiring a second step—like a code sent to your phone or an authentication app—beyond just your password.

Even if a scammer steals your login information through phishing or data breaches, MFA can stop them from accessing your account. Choose app-based authentication over text messages when available, as it's more secure.

Taking a few minutes to turn on MFA for email, banking, and additional online accounts can significantly reduce your risk of identity theft and financial loss.

Source: [staysafeonline.org](http://staysafeonline.org)



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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

# Attention Teachers

Learn about North Dakota's coal industry and leave with activities, knowledge, and great ideas to take back to your classroom.

Register at: [lignite.com/teachers-seminar](https://lignite.com/teachers-seminar)

Held at Bismarck State College campus in Bismarck, ND. **FREE** to attend (refundable deposit required). Tour energy production sites and get a close-up look at the role the lignite plays in North Dakota's economy.



## Need CE Hours?

**June 8-11, 2026**



**Service ANNIVERSARY** **5 YEARS**

**Dustin Voorhees**  
Agralite Mechanic



Thank you for your dedicated years of service to Agralite Electric Cooperative!

## Heat Pumps: What Are They And What Do They Do? *Continued*

What to ask:

- Ask about cold-climate performance for your area (*and whether you'll need backup heat*).
- Confirm the system is right-sized (*bigger isn't always better*).
- If you're choosing ductless, ask about zoning and placement for comfort.
- Ask what electrical work (*panel/circuit*) might be needed before installation.
- Check with your local power provider for rebates.

Heat pumps are electric appliances, so safe installation matters. Use a qualified contractor to determine the best heat pump system for your home, and if your installer recommends electrical panel upgrades, have them done by a licensed electrician.

To learn more about energy efficiency, as well as safety around electricity, go to [SafeElectricity.org](https://SafeElectricity.org).

## Grid Power Players

Electricity is available with the flip of a switch, but it travels great distances and is coordinated among multiple entities before it reaches your home or business. Take a look at the grid power players that ensure you receive reliable electricity.



### 1. Generation Owners & Operators

Power plants can be owned and operated by electric utilities, government entities or other private companies. Power plants produce electricity by converting energy from various sources—like natural gas, coal, nuclear, or renewables—into electricity.



### 2. Transmission System Owners & Operators

The transmission grid moves large amounts of electricity over long distances using high-voltage transmission lines attached to large towers. Like power plants, these lines can be owned by a variety of public and private companies.



### 3. Organized Wholesale Markets

In many parts of the country, Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs) & Independent System Operators (ISOs) coordinate the flow of electricity across regions by balancing supply and demand in real time and managing the dispatch of electric generation and transmission across large areas with the participation of generation and transmission owners.



### 4. Electric Utilities (That's Us!)

Electric distribution utilities take electricity from the transmission system and deliver it to homes and businesses through lower-voltage distribution lines. They also maintain local power lines, poles and other essential equipment.



### 5. End Users (That's You!)

End users consist of the homes, businesses and industries that consume electricity. Their demand drives how much electricity is generated and how the grid is managed in real time.

### Other Key Players:

**NERC:** The regulatory authority that develops and enforces mandatory, reliability standards for the North American bulk electric grid. (*Standards are developed through a stakeholder process.*)

**FERC:** Independent federal agency that oversees interstate transmission and wholesale electricity sales, ensuring fair access to the grid.

## Agralite Is Issuing Just Under A Half Million Dollars In Capital Credit Checks

Your Board of Directors has authorized the return of just under \$500 thousand dollars in capital credits to members who purchased electricity during the years 2003, 2010, and 2021. For eligible active members of the cooperative, capital credits of \$50 or less will be issued as a credit on your May electric bill that is sent out the first part of June. You will see this credit as a separate line item on your bill. For members whose capital credit refunds are greater than \$50 and are current on their electric bill, a check has been issued. Whether we return it to you in the form of a bill credit or a check, you can see the value of membership!



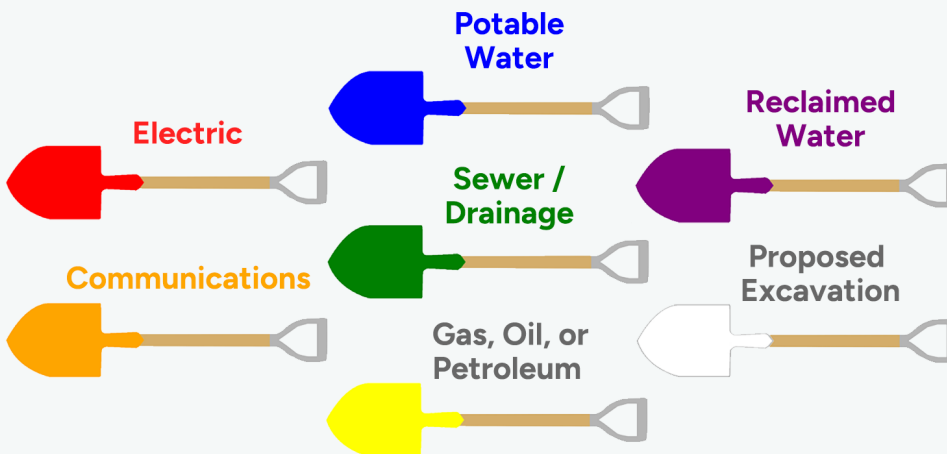
As a cooperative, Agralite allocates capital credits each year. At the end of the fiscal year, your capital credits allocated for that year are listed on your monthly bill. Capital credits are normally retained by the cooperative for a number of years and used as operating capital. 1634500 Once the Board of Directors deems appropriate, they approve the refund of these capital credits.

As member-owner perk of Agralite Electric Cooperative, you get money back. After the 2026 capital credit payout this year, Agralite will have returned over \$17 million in capital credits to its members. That's the power of the cooperative membership!



# Call 811 Before You Dig

Safe Electricity.org



## Switch and Save

Save Time and Money with Auto Pay and Paperless Billing



### How it works

Members who enroll in Auto Pay and/or Paperless Billing through SmartHub will receive a monthly bill credit of \$.50 for each program you enroll in. If you enroll in both, you will earn a \$1 monthly bill credit. Members that enroll will also be entered into a yearly drawing for a Solo Stove.

Get on-the-go convenience and pay anytime, anywhere, plus added security.

### Auto Pay

Your payment will be automatically deducted from your bank account or card on the 20th of each month.

### Paperless Billing

Members are notified each month by email when their bill is ready. You can view it by clicking on the link in the email or logging into your SmartHub account directly.

### How to Enroll

To enroll, log into your SmartHub account:

#### Auto Pay

Go to **Bill & Pay** >

**Auto Pay Program** >

**Enroll** > and add either a card or bank account

#### Paperless

Go to **Settings** >

**Paperless Billing** >

Select **Go Paperless**

### Questions?

Please contact the billing department at 320-843-4150 with any questions or if you need help enrolling.

[www.agralite.coop](http://www.agralite.coop)

## CURRENT AGRALITE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kathy Draeger, Clinton

*District 1*

Jeff Hufford, Morris

*District 2*

Bennett Zierke, Hancock

*District 3*

Steve Nelson, Starbuck

*District 4*

TBD\*

*District 5*

TBD\*

*District 6*

Warren Rau, Appleton

*District 7*

*\*To be determined at the Annual Meeting*

## MINUTES OF MEETING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

April 2026

Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., April 30, 2026. All members of the Board were present, except Director Gronseth. Director Nelson and Director Zierke joined the meeting via Zoom. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, the payment of capital credits of deceased members, Work Order #598, and Work Order #599 were approved.

Jonathan Messner, Manager of Member Services, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed load control for the month. He announced the Agralite scholarship winners. He gave an update on Operation Round Up. He discussed the Smart Grid Road Map plan that was completed, and the GRE Key Accounts meeting that was held at Agralite. He discussed updates to Policy 300.3 Large Power Service and new Policy 300.3 Large Load Rate and the Board approved them.

Stephanie Wroblewski, Manager of Finance/CFO, reported on activities of her department for the month. She discussed margins for the month of March. She discussed 2025 capital credit allocations. She brought forth capital credit retirement options and the Board approved payout Option 2 and the Basin capital credit payout. The checks will be mailed out the end of May. She stated that Agralite is to undergo a sales tax audit. She brought forth the 2026-2029 Work Plan loan documents and the Board approved them. She brought forth updated Policy 215 Mortgage Debt Limit

# Lightning Safety Word Search

**Did you know June 21-27 is National Lightning Safety Awareness Week?**

Lightning can happen fast and be very dangerous but staying safe is easy when you know what to do! Read the following safety tips, then find and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle below.



- When thunder roars, go **indoors**! If you can hear thunder, **lightning** is close enough to be dangerous.
- Stay away from all **water** sources. Don't swim, use hoses or play near standing water when a **storm** is present.
- Avoid tall things and open spaces. Stay away from **tall trees**, poles and open fields where lightning tends to **strike**.
- Wait 30 minutes after the last sound of **thunder**. Even if the rain stops, **wait** at least 30 minutes before going back outside.



and Corporate Debt Limit Resolution and the Board approved them.

A new policy, Policy 627 Artificial Intelligence, was discussed and the Board approved it.

The financials were given by Stephanie with a PowerPoint presentation.

Tom Hoffman, Manager of Engineering & Operations, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed line crew projects and outages for the month. He gave an update on the Stevens Milk Plant. He discussed an increase in tank/building moves through Agralite's system. He gave an update on the afterhours dispatch switch to SRS.

Tom gave the safety report.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed the Power Hour events. She discussed recent meetings she

attended including the East River Managers Meeting, STAR Board Meeting, MREA CEO Conference, and the GRE Managers Meeting. She gave a PowerPoint presentation on Transmission Extension options. A lengthy discussion was held.

The Board accepted the five Board Petition for Nominations that were received.

Director Draeger will be the 2026 GRE Annual Meeting voting delegate.

The Board discussed the NCSC Director Ballot nominees.

An Executive Session was held.

A roundtable was held.

The May board meeting was set for the 28th.

Being no further business came before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.