



Photo: Peggy Cameron, May Calendar Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

May 2024

EMPOWERING

communities with
innovative, sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER

80 YEARS

2024 Annual Meeting Of Agralite Electric Cooperative

Agralite Electric Cooperative is pleased to invite you to the 85th Annual Meeting of Agralite Electric Cooperative. This is your opportunity to take part in the governing of your electric cooperative.

This year, District 1 and District 2 seats are up for election. In District 1, Kathy Draeger is up for election for another term. Kathy has served on the Board of Directors for the cooperative since 2015. In District 2, Jeff Hufford is up for election for another term. Jeff has served on the Board of Directors for the cooperative since 2012 and has been Secretary/Treasurer since 2016. Mailed separately, you will find the 2023 Annual Report for the cooperative, as well as the financial reports. Join us June 4th and enjoy some good food, great music, and partake in the proceeding of your electric cooperative!

How To Vote

All voting will be done by either delivering it by hand or depositing it in the U.S. Mail. The ballot shall be enclosed in a sealed official envelope bearing your name and address, and addressed to the secretary. Ballots are due to the Agralite office no later than 3:00 p.m. on June 4th. Ballots will not be accepted at the meeting.

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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

 Like us on Facebook



Office Hours

Closed Monday, May 27th, for Memorial Day

Beginning Tuesday, May 28th:
Office hours change to 7:00 am to 3:30 pm



Touchstone Energy®

Agralite is a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative.

SAVE THE DATE

**Agralite Electric Cooperative's
85th Annual Meeting**

**June 4th, 2024
@ Benson High School**

5:30PM – 6:45PM:

Registration and steak supper grilled by the West Central Cattlemen's Association

7:00 PM:

Business meeting

*Hundreds of dollars in door prizes

*Each registered member will receive a gift

2024 ANNUAL MEETING





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.

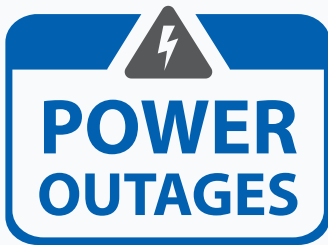
Energy Saving Tip:



Looking for an easy way to manage home energy use? Smart plugs are inexpensive and offer convenient solutions for scheduling and controlling your favorite electronic devices.

With smart plugs, you can easily manage your coffee maker, lighting, home office equipment, video game consoles and more. Smart plugs can help you manage devices through a smart phone app, your home assistant or voice control. By conveniently powering off or scheduling devices, you can save energy (and money!).

Source: energystar.gov



Call Day or Night
1.888.884.3887

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

May Energy Payment is due June 20.*
*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.

Make Your Voice Heard At The 2024 Annual Meeting

by Jenny Stryhn, General Manager



Agralite Electric Cooperative will be hosting our annual meeting next month on June 4th. It is a great opportunity for us as a cooperative to engage with our membership—you, the members we serve! There is always great discussion, and I know our co-op team is energized by these interactions.

If you've never attended the annual meeting, I'd encourage you to participate. Why? Because input from members like you matters and helps drive the direction of the co-op. 704200

At the annual meeting, we report on current initiatives and discuss the financial health and priorities for the coming years, along with a focus on our employees that serve you, each and every day. Although, equally important, this is also an opportunity for Agralite to hear from you.

This is also a time to vote for new directors who will represent you and our community's interests in the co-op. As a member of Agralite, you have the power to help shape our community's energy future.

Electric co-ops are democratically controlled by the members we serve, which means you have a say in who governs our co-op. By voting in the annual director election, you can weigh in on the leaders who will make important decisions about the future of the cooperative and our local energy needs.

Agralite's board of directors are community-minded individuals with different skill sets. We rely on them to help us make more informed decisions on long-term priorities and investments. Agralite has seven directors who live in the co-op's service area. We consider them the eyes and ears of the community because they provide their unique perspective on various local issues.

If you've never been to an annual meeting or it's been a while, we hope you'll stop by. We'll have fun activities for all ages, so we hope to see you and your family there. Join us for food, fun, door prizes and more. All members who attend the event will receive a free gift!

Your Agralite Electric Cooperative team will be ready to answer any energy-related questions you may have. We look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting on Tuesday, June 4th. You will be receiving an official notice of the annual meeting in a separate mailing a couple weeks prior to the meeting outlining the details for the meeting. We look forward to seeing you!



Service

ANNIVERSARIES

FRONT ROW
(left to right)

10
YEARS

Jenny Stryhn
General Manager

10
YEARS

Marissa Chevalier
Executive Assistant

5
YEARS

Stephanie Wroblewski
Manager of Finance

BACK ROW
(left to right)

10
YEARS

Ryan Hanson
Lineman

30
YEARS

Dave Tolifson
Staking Engineer

20
YEARS

Jon Dale
Meter Tech





Jeff Hufford *District 2 Board Nominee*

1. Please tell Agralite Members a little bit about yourself.

I have lived my entire life in the Morris area, except during college. I farm with my son, brother, and nephew raising row crops, small grain, and alfalfa. We also feed cattle and have a cow/calf operation. I'm active in several organizations. I enjoy attending my grandsons' activities, as well as hunting, fishing, and traveling. I have several grills/smokers and use them often!

2. Why do you want to be a Director?

I've been a director at Agralite for 12 years and enjoy working with the rest of the board, staff, and employees. We are fortunate as a cooperative to have a great group of people like them in their positions. I feel that my experience on the Agralite board, as well as the East River Electric Cooperative board, gives me insight and understanding that can benefit the boardroom and the cooperative.

3. What aspects of the director's job do you consider the most crucial?

Working with staff to help provide member-owners with reasonably priced, reliable power in a safe way. It's important as a director to be educated as much as possible about the cooperative power model and to learn as much as we can about the needs of our membership.

4. What work experience or other board experience do you have that will help you be an effective Director?

Township Clerk for 22 years. Currently on Stevens County FSA Committee. Represent Agralite and 3 other cooperatives on the Board of Directors at East River Electric Cooperative, which is one of our power suppliers. 1488800 Past board member of Stevens County Pork Producers, and still active with West Central Cattlemen's Association.

5. What challenges do you see for Agralite Electric Cooperative in the future and how does the cooperative meet these challenges?

Change. It comes quickly. There is a big need for new generation and lines as there is new demand almost constantly coming online. Renewables will be a large part of that generation. They will need to be incorporated with our baseline generation of hydro, nuclear, and fossil fuel in a safe, reliable manner.



Kathy Draeger *District 1 Board Nominee*

1. Please tell Agralite Members a little bit about yourself.

My family includes husband Mike Jorgenson, and children Alma, Jens, and Lake. We live on the family farm in Malta Township, Big Stone County. Our three kids graduated from Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley school. Over the past years, we raised Lowline Angus beef, small grains, alfalfa/hay, and poultry. We were very proud to be named the Big Stone County Farm Family of the year in 2014 and also named Big Stone Conservation Farm of the Year in 2014. I work for U of M Extension as the statewide director of a program that works with communities throughout greater Minnesota.

2. Why do you want to be a Director?

I believe in the Cooperative business model and would like to better serve the people in our area by serving on the Agralite board. Energy issues are an important issue of our time and will always be critical to the well-being of Agralite members.

3. What aspects of the director's job do you consider the most crucial?

Agralite Directors play an important role in bringing the concerns and needs of the co-op members to the board. Board members are tasked with serving as both an advisory and governing role for the member-based co-op. The energy world is changing rapidly with new technology changing how power is generated and distributed and even used! It is an exciting time to be a part of rural energy issues and I want to contribute to strategic decision making of how our coop will thrive going forward. The Agralite board has the serious responsibility to ensure its members have access to affordable and reliable electricity.

4. What work experience or other board experience do you have that will help you be an effective Director?

I have been with U of M Extension for over 15 years and work with communities around the state of Minnesota. I have an entrepreneurial background having founded two successful S-Corporations focusing on agricultural and environmental research and development, one of which was sold to an engineering firm. Because of my business background, I continue to look for future opportunities for our coop and our members. I have served on multiple nonprofit, church, and other boards of directors and take my responsibilities seriously. We are members of Trinity Lutheran in Clinton, MN, and I served on the church council for 6 years. I helped start and served on the board of the Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley School Foundation that is associated with the Southwest Initiative Foundation. We are active members of Big Stone County Farmers Union and the Sustainable Farming Association and members of Farm Bureau.

5. What challenges do you see for Agralite Electric Cooperative in the future and how does the cooperative meet these challenges?

Agralite maintains 2,400 miles of power lines and is responsible for providing power to the 3,700 members of the co-op. There are changes occurring in the national conversation surrounding power generation and energy usage and Agralite is preparing for how those changes could impact members. Even more, Agralite has an opportunity to understand how those possible changes could be used to leverage benefits to members and mitigate market risk factors. While there may be some business opportunities in renewable energy (like the community solar garden that Agralite features in its newsletter), Agralite has the responsibility to make sure that affordable energy is available to all of the membership.

May is Military Appreciation Month



We hope you'll join us in recognizing the sacrifices veterans have made for our great country—and the many contributions they continue to make to our wonderful community.

Veterans, including Agralite's Meter Tech, Jon Dale, and Lineman, Ryan Hanson, we salute you!



This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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 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.

Power Hour Events

Our Power Hour events were created to provide members with the opportunity to meet their directors, ask questions, and mingle with other coop members.

Our two Power Hour events took place at 10 A.M. on March 21st in Clinton and March 22nd in Swift Falls. The events offered a platform for members to interact with coop representatives. Conversations primarily focused on the new headquarters facility, the generator program, the financial health of the cooperative, and work plan projects.

Thank you to all our members that attended these events! Your active participation in the co-op through these events contributes to the overall success of the cooperative.



It's All About The Energy: Join Agralite Electric Cooperative For An Energy Tour Bus Trip

Join Us August 21-23: \$175 per person / 25 seats available

We're excited to invite you to join us for our 2024 Energy Tour from August 21-23! This three-day luxury coach tour will take you through North Dakota's coal country, where you'll learn how electric power is generated at a lignite coal plant, how a coal-gasification plant produces natural gas, and visit the North Dakota History Museum.

The tour includes visits to:

- Basin Electric Powers Antelope Valley Power Station near Beulah, ND
- Great Plains SynFuels Plant
- The Coteau Properties Freedom Coal Mine
- Garrison Dam Hydropower Generation Plant
- The North Dakota History Center
- Lewis & Clark Riverboat Dinner Cruise

This trip promises to be both fun and educational, and we hope you'll join us for this exciting opportunity. [Sign up by August 1st by calling our office at 320-843-4150.](#)

You'll be staying at a hotel in Mandan for two nights. The trip cost is \$175 per person. 985600 Most meals are included, except for fast food and coffee stops during the bus trip to and from North Dakota, and any restaurants you may visit during your free time.

Making the Switch to

ELECTRIC LAWN EQUIPMENT

Source: Consumer Reports

Considering electric equipment to maintain your outdoor space? Check out the benefits of electric and considerations before making the switch.



Benefits of Electric Equipment

- Battery-powered equipment produces zero emissions
- No hassle and mess from gasoline and oil
- Quieter and more reliable than gas-powered equipment
- Require less energy to do the same amount of work as gas-powered tools

Considerations Before Going Electric

- Purchasing from a single brand can streamline charging
- Consider the size of your property and battery run time
- Backup batteries may be needed for larger properties
- Electric equipment is pricier up front

To the Top!

Training Stages for Electric Lineworkers

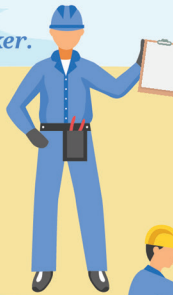
Known for their strength and agility, lineworkers are dedicated to ensuring our communities have reliable power. Safety is always top priority on the job, which is why lineworkers spend thousands of hours training as they advance their skills.

Here's a look at the career progression of a lineworker.

4.

Crew Leader

A crew leader is an advanced position that requires supervising lineworkers on job sites, coordinating with contractors, and directing daily activities for crews.



3.

Journeyman Lineworker

Post-apprenticeship and with roughly 7,000+ hours of training under their belt, journeyman lineworkers are fully trained in their field. They repair, update, and install overhead and underground power lines, as well as other electrical equipment.



2.

Apprentice Lineworker

Before reaching lineworker status, they are required to work as an apprentice. Apprentice lineworkers earn competitive wages while receiving hands-on training and experience in the field. They typically spend four years in their apprenticeship.



1.

Apprentice Lineworker

Many lineworkers begin their career as a groundperson, or linehelper. They assist line crews with tools, keeping job sites safe and operating smaller equipment.



Regardless of stage, all lineworkers continue education and training throughout their career. Training and testing requirements vary from utility to utility.

5 WAYS TO SAVE THIS SUMMER

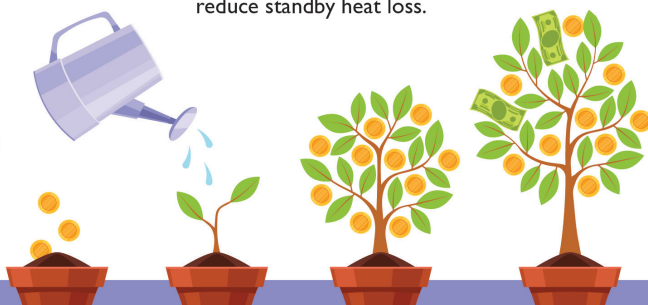
When summer temperatures rise, so do our energy bills. Here are a few ways you can reduce energy use and grow your summer savings.

1. Raise your thermostat.

The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temp, the more you'll save.

2. Install window coverings

like blinds or light-blocking curtains to prevent indoor heat gain during the day.



3. Seal leaks with caulk and weatherstripping

 around windows and exterior doors. Air leaks force your air conditioner to work harder and run longer than necessary.

4. Run ceiling fans

 for additional cooling but turn them off when you leave the room.

5. Lower your water heater thermostat

 to 120 degrees to reduce standby heat loss.

Source: Dept. of Energy

Twins

FREE YOUTH BASEBALL CLINIC

OPEN TO EVERYONE, AGES 6-12!
SUNDAY, JUNE 30

TIME:

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

HOST:

Agralite Electric
Cooperative

FIELD:

Benson Baseball Field
1400 Montana Ave
Benson, MN 56215

REGISTER:

PLAYBALLMN.COM

Twins
COMMUNITY FUND

GREAT RIVER
ENERGY.



FREE Lignite Education TEACHERS SEMINAR

Bismarck State College
June 10-13, 2024

Teachers receive 2 graduate professional development credits!

Hands-on activities. Receive classroom materials.



For more information or apply online:
www.lignite.com/teachers

CURRENT AGRALITE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Kathy Draeger, Clinton
District 1
- Jeff Hufford, Morris
District 2 - Secretary/Treasurer
- Bennett Zierke, Hancock
District 3
- Steve Nelson, Starbuck
District 4
- Orvin Gronseth, Murdock
District 5 - Vice President
- Andrea Thomson, Benson
District 6
- Warren Rau, Appleton
District 7 - President

MINUTES OF MEETING BOARD OF DIRECTORS March 2024

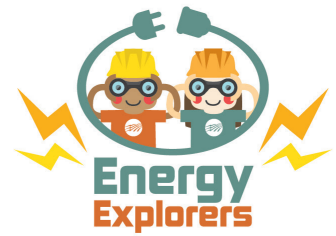
Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., March 28, 2024. All members of the Board were present. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, the payment of capital credits of deceased members, Work Order #562, and February Special Equipment 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 discussed the Briggs generator program, Distributed Energy Resource applications, and the ALM project. He discussed the two Power Hour events. He stated that the MNTwins Youth Baseball Clinic will be June 30th. He discussed a potential REDLG loan opportunity for a new butcher shop in Agralite’s territory. He discussed the Agralite logo.

Stephanie Wroblewski, Manager of Finance/CFO, discussed margins for the month of February. She discussed patronage updates and a SmartHub promotion she is working on. She brought forth 2023 Capital Credit Allocations and the Board approved it.

Board Policies 200-215 were reviewed and the Board approved the recommended changes.

Safety Ambassador Checklist



Practicing safety near electricity can save lives, and we want you to spread the important message of safety. With the help of an adult, complete the checklist below then cut out the badge to show you care about electrical safety.

TASK	COMPLETED
Electrical outlets are not overloaded with multiple power strips and devices.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electrical cords are not causing a trip hazard or placed under rugs or carpet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smoke alarms are working.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smoke alarms are installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the house.	<input type="checkbox"/>
All light switches are working properly.	<input type="checkbox"/>
SIGNATURE _____	

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 discussed the infrastructure grants and new projects he has been working on.

Tom gave the safety report. 1027002

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She gave an update on the new headquarters facility project. She discussed recent meetings she attended including the NRECA PowerXchange, MREA Annual Meeting, GRE Manager’s Meeting, and East River

Manager’s Meeting. She discussed the Power Hour events. She discussed MREA’s 2024 Legislative Priorities. She showed a PowerPoint presentation from STAR Energy Services.

A roundtable discussion was held on topics including the NRECA PowerXchange, MREA Annual Meeting, and Distributed Energy Resources.

The April board meeting was set for the 25th.

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