



Photo: Sue Schuster, October Calendar Photo Contest Winner

# NEWSLETTER

October 2025

## Powered By Purpose

This month, electric cooperatives across the country take time to celebrate National Co-op Month and reflect on the unique advantages of being part of a cooperative. It's also the perfect time to thank you—the members who make it all possible. For us, it's not just a celebration. It's a chance to reaffirm the values that guide everything we do.

Unlike investor-owned utilities, our co-op doesn't exist to make profits for distant shareholders. We exist to serve you—our members, our neighbors, and our communities. That purpose is what sets us apart. It's why we were founded, and it's what continues to drive every decision we make. At its core, being a cooperative means we are member-owned and locally controlled.

That's not just a tagline; it's the very heart of our business model. Members have a voice in how our co-op operates. You elect board members who live right here in our service area and understand the unique challenges and opportunities our communities face. Decisions aren't made in corporate boardrooms hundreds of miles away; they're made here at home, by people who care about the same things you do. 1645900 This local accountability means we can stay focused on what matters most: delivering reliable, affordable electricity and providing real value to the people we serve. [Article continues on page 2](#)

**EMPOWERING**  
communities

with innovative  
and sustainable  
energy solutions

FOR OVER  
**85**  
YEARS

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## October is co-op month - Let's celebrate!



You're invited to Agralite's

# OPEN HOUSE

**October 28, 2025**

**Tour the new facility  
and meet the team!**

Stop in anytime between  
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM.  
A light lunch will be served.

**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



**Office Hours:**  
**8:00AM - 4:30PM**



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 Gloria Danielson for finding her account number in the August newsletter.

### Energy Saving Tip:



As winter approaches, now is the time to inspect your home for air leaks around windows. Leaks reduce indoor comfort and lead to higher heating costs. 668603

If you can see daylight around the edges of a window frame or if a window rattles slightly when touched, air is likely leaking.

Caulk and weatherstripping are simple, effective methods for sealing windows. These materials are available in a variety of compounds and forms, each designed for different types of services. Choose the right product and apply it properly to reduce heat loss, improve comfort, and lower energy bills.



Call Day or Night  
1.888.884.3887

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

October Energy Payment is due November 20.\*

\*We accept Visa, Discover, and Mastercard.

## Powered By Purpose *Continued*

We do that by investing in essential infrastructure upgrades and technologies that strengthen our local grid and improve electric service. We work hard to manage costs and keep rates as low as possible—because we know how much rising prices affect families and small businesses in our area. And when storms hit or outages occur, Agralite Electric Cooperative crews are here and ready to respond quickly, because we live here too. But our

commitment doesn't end at the power lines. Co-ops were built to meet community needs, and that purpose extends well beyond delivering electricity. Whether we're supporting local schools, sponsoring youth programs, or partnering with volunteer organizations, we are always looking for ways to improve the quality of life in the places we serve. Community support isn't an afterthought—it's part of our mission. We're also planning for the future. As electricity demand grows due to new technologies and economic development, electric co-ops are working to ensure we continue to meet those needs with a balanced, reliable energy mix. We know our members care about affordability and dependability, and we're committed to delivering both. That's the power of the cooperative difference. That's what it means to be powered by purpose. This National Co-op Month, take pride in your cooperative membership. You're not just a customer—you're an owner, a stakeholder, and a vital part of a larger effort to keep our community strong, connected and energized. Thank you for the trust you place in us. We're proud to be your local electric cooperative.

### Manager's Article by Jenny Stryhn, General Manager

At Agralite Electric Cooperative, we take pride in planning ahead and keeping our members informed. When we see changes on the horizon that could affect you, we believe in communicating early and openly. Recently, we were notified by one of our wholesale power suppliers, Basin Electric, that a significant rate increase is coming. While discussions are still underway and we're working diligently to minimize the impact, we want to let you know that a rate adjustment is expected to take effect in 2026.

We understand this isn't the kind of news anyone wants to hear. But as a member-owned cooperative, we feel it's important to be transparent—about what's happening, why it's happening, and what we're doing in response. You're not just customers; you're member-owners, and you deserve to be part of the conversation.

For several years, we've shared projections that electricity costs across the utility industry are expected to rise. That projection is now becoming reality. Like most electric cooperatives, we don't generate our own power—we purchase it from wholesale generation and transmission (G&T) providers. As those providers face rising costs, those increases are passed along to us, and ultimately, to you as a member.

While the exact details of the 2026 rate change are still being finalized, it's important to understand the broader picture. This shift is driven by significant industry-wide changes that are affecting electric utilities nationwide:

**Steady Load Growth:** As homes, businesses, and communities increase their reliance on electricity, demand continues to grow. This includes the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs), and new technologies like artificial intelligence (AI). Agricultural operations are also becoming more electrified, and even everyday conveniences like home charging stations and smart appliances are adding to the overall load. To meet this growing demand, our wholesale providers must invest in new generation capacity.

[Article continues on page 3](#)





Manager’s Article *Continued*

**New Generation & Transmission Projects:** To support growing electricity demand, our wholesale providers are investing in new power plants, including natural gas facilities for on-demand generation. In addition, new high-voltage transmission lines are needed to carry electricity from where it’s produced to where it’s used. These large-scale infrastructure projects are complex, take years to permit and construct, and require billions of dollars in capital.

**Aging Infrastructure:** Much of the grid infrastructure in the U.S. was built decades ago. Aging substations, transformers, and transmission lines are nearing the end of their operational life. Replacing and upgrading these critical components is necessary to avoid failures, maintain system safety, and ensure reliable delivery of power in all conditions.

**Reliability & Reserve Requirements:** Grid reliability is now under greater scrutiny than ever before, especially following high-profile outages caused by severe weather and unexpected system strain. Utilities are now required to maintain higher reserve margins, which is a buffer of available generation capacity above projected demand. This helps prevent blackouts during peak usage or emergencies but requires significant investment in additional power supply, whether through market purchases or new construction.

**Stricter Financial Benchmarks:** In today’s lending environment, strong credit ratings are essential for power providers to access financing at competitive interest rates. To maintain those ratings, providers must meet higher margin and cash flow requirements, which means keeping adequate revenue above expenses. This financial stability helps ensure they can fund necessary upgrades and projects without dramatically increasing borrowing costs, which in turn helps keep long-term energy prices more stable.

These challenges are not unique to Agralite Electric Cooperative; they are nationwide. But they will have local impact and we take that seriously. We’re currently working with Basin Electric and other partners to phase in any increases and avoid large, immediate jumps in bills. We’re always looking internally to reduce costs and identify operational savings wherever possible. You’ll hear more from us as the final rates are confirmed. We’ll share details through the newsletter, bill inserts, and our website. We’re also available anytime by phone or in person if you have questions or concerns. As always, thank you for your continued interest in your electric cooperative.

**Savings For Home Energy Upgrades Ending Soon**

If you’re a homeowner with plans to make any energy-efficient upgrades, now is the time to see if those projects qualify you for a federal tax credit before they expire. If you’ve been thinking about installing new windows, purchasing an electric vehicle, or even conducting a home energy audit to see what improvements you could make, here is a rundown of the available tax credits and the date they expire.

Category	Description	Tax Credit Amount	Expiration Date
Energy efficient home upgrades	For the purchase and installation of energy efficient appliances or building envelope components	Up to \$2,000 for heat pumps and heat pump water heaters \$1,200 for insulation/air sealing \$600 for windows	Dec. 31, 2025
Clean energy systems	For investments in renewable energy for your home	Equals 30% of qualifying costs for rooftop solar, battery storage, and geothermal heating installation	Dec. 31, 2025

Before pursuing any of the above upgrades, contact Agralite to inquire about a referral for a qualified, trusted contractor in your area. Following that, coordinate with your contractor for the installation or other work to be completed by the specific tax credit’s deadline date in order to meet requirements.

TIPS TO AVOID  
**ENERGY SCAMS**



Do you know the warning signs of an energy scam? Scammers will often use **high-pressure tactics** that create a sense of urgency. They may also ask for **unusual payment methods** such as gift cards or cryptocurrency.

**Dodgy communication** is typically associated with a scam, including poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses.

If you spot any of these warning signs, take a moment to pause and determine if it’s legitimate or if it’s a scam.



Source: Federal Trade Commission

2025 *Grand Prize Winner!*  
**FARMFEST**

Congratulations to Joe Koehl for winning the EGO ice auger at our Farmfest booth!

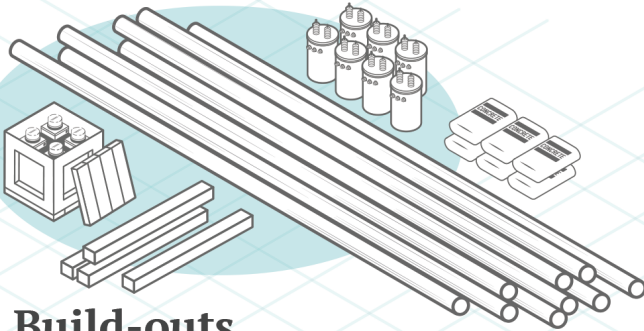


# Cost Increases

The past five years have been a period of exploding costs for the electric utility industry and for broadband providers, pushed by soaring demand, supply chain challenges, raw materials shortages, increased labor costs and tariffs. The impact has been rapid increases in the cost of producing power, longer and more unpredictable project timelines and the need for more financing, all of which have driven electric rates up for residences, businesses and other end-users. Here's a look at what's contributing to the trend. **Percent increase since 2020:**

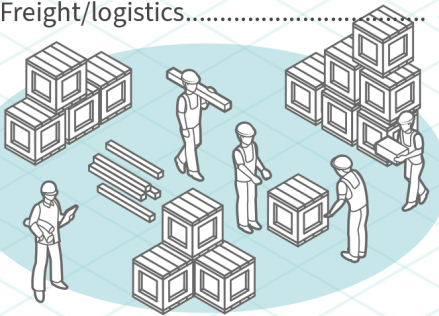
## Infrastructure

Utility poles (wood, steel, composite)	+25-40%
Crossarms & braces (steel/wood).....	+20-35%
Conductor wire (aluminum/copper).....	+30-50%
Transformers.....	+70-100%
Grain-oriented electrical steel.....	+80-100%
Oil/dielectric fluids.....	+25-40%
Copper wiring.....	+50%
Concrete.....	+25-35%
Smart meters.....	+20-35%
Pad-mounted switchgear.....	+25-40%
Circuit breakers/reclosers.....	+20-35%



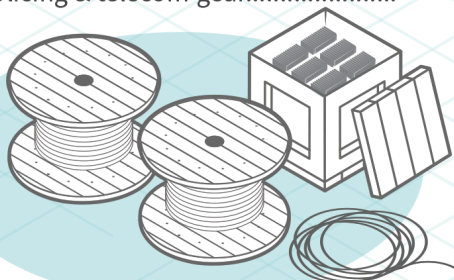
## Build-outs

Utility construction labor.....	+20-40%
Freight/logistics.....	+30-60%



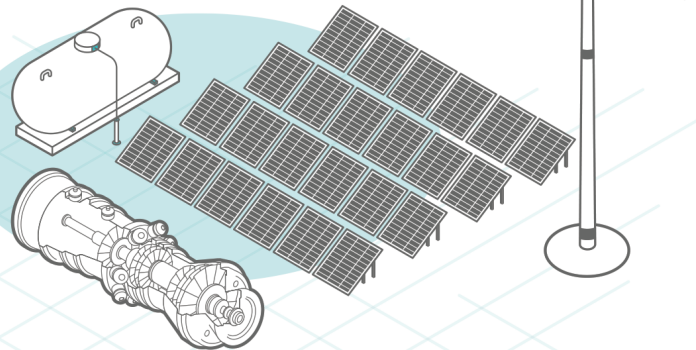
## Broadband

Fiber-optic cable.....	+25-40%
Splicing & telecom gear.....	+20-30%



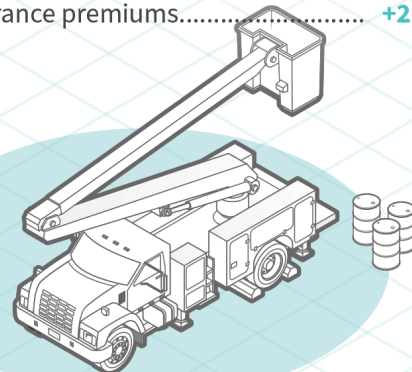
## Generation

Diesel gensets.....	+20-40%
Gas turbines.....	+20-30%
Solar PV systems.....	+25-35%
Wind turbines.....	+25-35%
Hydropower components.....	+20-30%
Battery storage.....	+25-40%
SCADA/EMS systems.....	+20-30%
Inverters.....	+20-30%
Relays & switchgear.....	+25-40%
Natural gas.....	+20-120%
Coal.....	+30-60%
Diesel/fuel oil.....	+40-70%



## Fleets

Light trucks.....	+25-40%
Bucket trucks, digger derricks.....	+20-50%
Fuel costs (especially diesel).....	+20-30%
Maintenance.....	+15-25%
Insurance premiums.....	+20%





## Basin Electric Moving Forward With The Bison Generation Station

Basin Electric has announced they will build a new natural gas-fired electric power plant near Epping, North Dakota, that will be fully operational by 2030. The nearly \$4 billion project, called the Bison Generation Station, will produce about 1,490 megawatts of electricity, one of the largest electric generation projects in the cooperative's history. Comprised of two units that would produce roughly 745 MW each, the facility will help meet electric load growth with baseload generation in the region that stems from industrial work, manufacturing, data processing, residential customers, and small businesses, including farms and ranches.

At peak construction in 2027, the project is expected to employ roughly 1,000 workers. Once completed, the facility will provide approximately 50 full-time positions for operations, maintenance, and administration. Commercial operations are set to begin in 2030. 1698300 The project would also be the first power plant in decades that serves a "baseload," a term used to describe around-the-clock demands.

This will be the largest power plant solely owned by Basin Electric. Basin Electric Power Cooperative is owned by 139 rural electric cooperative systems, including Agralite Electric Cooperative, in nine states: Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

### COLD WEATHER RULE & ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM NOTICE

*In accordance with Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule, electric service cannot be disconnected for nonpayment between October 1 and April 30 if electricity is the primary heat source and ALL of the following statements apply:*

- Your household income is at or below 50% of the state median household income. Income may be verified on forms provided by Agralite Electric Cooperative or by the local energy assistance provider.
- You enter into and make reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
- You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills from Agralite Electric Cooperative.

#### Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule does not completely stop winter disconnects

*Before disconnecting electric service to residential members between October 1 and April 30, Agralite Electric Cooperative must provide:*

- A 30-day notice of disconnection;
- A statement of members' rights and responsibilities;
- A list of local energy assistance providers;
- Forms on which to request Cold Weather Rule protection; and
- A statement explaining available payment plans and other options to continue service.

#### Energy Assistance Program

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at or below 50% of the state median income (\$58,793 for a family of four) to qualify for benefits. Applications must be received or postmarked by May 31, 2026.

*To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:*

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>, for more details and to access the application portal.
- Contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance.
- Agralite Electric Cooperative exists because of you, and we are dedicated to the people and communities we serve. If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for either of these programs, please contact our billing department to set up a payment plan.

**Prairie 5 CAC 320-269-7976 West Central CAC 800-492-4805**  
**Heartland CAC 320-235-0850**

## CHARGE into Fire Safety™

### Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home

- **BUY** only listed products.
- **CHARGE** devices safely.
- **RECYCLE** batteries responsibly.

FIRE  
PREVENTION  
WEEK™



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## 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

August 2025

Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., August 28, 2025. 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 #584, Work Order #585, and July 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 battery storage pilot project and a discussion was held. He stated that Doug Gunderson was hired as the new custodian and his first day was August 25th. He discussed the Touchstone Energy booth at Farm Fest that Agralite attended.

Stephanie Wroblewski, Manager of Finance/CFO, reported on activities of her department for the month. She discussed margins for the month of July. She discussed patronage received from RESCO. She discussed insurance renewals and the new MN Paid Leave program. 917601

The financials were given by Stephanie with a PowerPoint presentation.

Jenny Stryhn reported on activities of the Engineering & Operations department for the month. She discussed



# Co-op Month Word Search

Did you know October is National Co-op Month?

Read the following facts to learn how co-ops are unique, then find and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle.

B	T	A	M	L	J	S	T	K	S	N	B	M	T	M
S	R	G	T	A	C	F	V	E	S	I	S	U	J	P
Z	Q	Z	M	M	V	G	L	K	E	F	U	F	A	J
Q	R	F	R	M	N	P	C	W	I	Z	N	G	K	K
L	A	E	Q	B	I	N	P	C	T	N	V	K	T	W
H	K	V	H	C	X	I	C	B	I	H	Y	S	I	S
X	S	O	N	T	C	W	B	L	N	E	F	D	U	F
P	Z	I	M	R	E	R	I	W	U	L	H	F	K	I
C	R	C	Y	E	X	G	T	H	M	O	B	M	G	B
P	A	D	O	U	M	D	O	Z	M	C	J	W	Y	T
A	A	T	U	V	Z	B	X	T	O	A	Q	J	B	X
I	F	D	H	F	O	S	E	N	C	L	W	O	J	V
L	U	P	C	O	O	P	E	R	A	T	I	V	E	F
F	F	C	N	K	B	S	I	I	S	Q	D	S	U	Y
A	X	S	Y	X	Y	B	P	G	G	B	M	D	P	D

**Fun Facts about Co-ops:**

- Co-ops and their members work **together** toward a common goal.
- Co-ops are local organizations, so they understand the **communities** they serve.
- All co-ops operate according to the same set of seven cooperative **principles**.
- Concern for community is the seventh **cooperative** principle.
- Co-ops don't serve customers; instead, they serve **members**.
- Co-ops are led by the **local** members they serve.

line crew projects and outages for the month. She discussed the Governor declared disaster assistance for the summer storms. She gave an update on the Stevens Milk Plant.

Jenny gave the safety report.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed the recent rain fall. She discussed the new headquarters facility and upcoming open house. She discussed recent meetings she attended including the East River managers meeting, Basin Annual Meeting, MREA Energy Issues Summit, and the GRE Managers Meeting. She gave an update on Basin's proposed rate increase. She discussed the WAPA Contract Amendment for cooperatives interested in selling RECs and the Board approved it. The

open East River board seat was discussed and the Board appointed Director Hufford to the board seat. She discussed Full Circle Farm's interest in applying for a REED and REDLG loan, as well as DENCO's interest. Director Rau will be the CFC Voting Delegate and Jenny Stryhn will be the alternate.

Director Gronseth will be the Mid-West Electric Voting Delegate and Director Zierke will be the alternate.

Director Rau will be the Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange Voting Delegate.

A roundtable discussion was held regarding East River load control and Distributed Generation. The September board meeting was set for the 29th. Being no further business came before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.