



Pine to Prairie News

First 'Sota Grown Harvest Anticipated in October

By the beginning of October, a harvest of kale will be ready from the 'Sota Grown hydroponic container in Staples, MN. This first harvest will provide fresh, locally-grown produce for families throughout the region.

The 'Sota Grown initiative is a collaborative indoor agriculture project between *Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative*, *Central Lakes College (CLC)*, *Lakewood Health System*, *Great River Energy*, and the *Electric Power Research Institute*. The fully enclosed hydroponic container, located on

the CLC campus in Staples, utilizes technology to make it easy to supply local, year-round, fresh, sustainably grown food. The hydroponic container provides valuable educational opportunities for CLC students and intern volunteers.

Kale seedlings were first planted in the container on June 11th and germinated June 16th. After three weeks, the seedlings were large enough to be



transplanted from seedling troughs into the vertical growing panels in the container. The plants will remain vertical through harvesting, during which only the leaves are harvested, leaving the base of the plants so the kale can continue growing.

Once harvested, the kale will be delivered to Lakewood Health and contribute to Lakewood Engage, a series of initiatives to promote health. These local food-access initiatives provide healthy food options to more

than 600 people in our community each month. They aim to increase access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food – addressing hunger-health disparities throughout the federally designated food desert region.

In addition to providing food for our community, this collaborative project will help gather important data for load forecasting, rate design, and the future expansion of not only Minnesota's indoor agriculture industry, but across the nation. It is one of 11 shipping container pods set up around the country to learn more about sustainable, year-round food production. Todd-Wadena is excited to play an important role in researching and developing this innovative approach to farming and feeding our community.



'Sota Grown is part of a nationwide research project where fully enclosed hydroponic containers utilize technology to supply local, year-round, fresh, sustainably grown food regardless of local climate.

Bifurcated Annual Meeting: Part 2 **AND MOVIE!**

When: Friday, September 18th

Where: Long Prairie Drive-In Theater
24257 Riverside Drive
Long Prairie, MN 56347

Look for your member ticket in next month's newsletter!

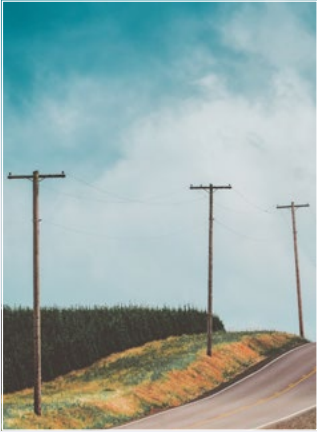
Join us for the second part of our bifurcated annual meeting! The drive-in theater opens at 6:30 p.m., and members are encouraged to come early with yard games to enjoy prior to the meeting. At 7:45 p.m. there will be a brief business report from CEO *Dan Carlisle* and Board Chair *Miles Kuschel*. The movie will start at 8 p.m. Members will receive a concession ticket for water/soda, popcorn, and candy to enjoy while watching the movie, **Grease!**



Your Co-op's Service Territory Rights

One data metric rural electric cooperative managers look at is "line density." The number of members per mile of electric line is significant because the more members that exist, the cheaper it is for each member to pay for construction and maintenance of the electric distribution

line and related operations costs. Simply stated, the costs can be spread out among more members. The average electric co-op in Minnesota has 6.6 members per mile of electric line, with all other utilities (including investor-owned and municipal services) averaging 32 customers per mile of line. Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative averages just under 4 members per mile of electric line.



In Minnesota, like many states, electric service territories have been assigned to the various investor-owned, municipal, and rural electric cooperative utilities. These territories are marked on maps that are maintained at the State Public Utility Commission office in St. Paul. A series of statutes purport to protect these service territories by preventing another utility from entering one's protected territory and serving customers. The reasoning behind this approach is to encourage the development of a reliable electric system and to avoid the cost of duplication of poles, wires, and related infrastructure (and the cost thereof, which would be passed on to the consumer). Certain notable exceptions exist in the statutes.

One exception to the exclusive service territory rule is known as the *municipal annexation exception*. Found at Minn. Stat. 216B.44, this statute allows a municipality to annex, or "take," certain electric service territory from a rural electric cooperative. No similar statute exists to allow a rural electric co-op to annex or take service territory from a municipality. As a result, rural electric cooperatives are somewhat defenseless if a municipality decides it wants to take over parts of a co-op's service territory. Recent history has shown that municipalities have exercised their statutory power of service territory annexation in situations where the rural electric cooperative has developed successful, profitable electric loads or in areas where future positive growth is imminent. The result

of municipal annexation is that a cooperative's ability to grow and to improve the line density metric, for the benefit of all of its members, has been greatly impacted.

Fortunately, the applicable statutes do have one mode of protection built in for the utility that is having its territory and prime electric load taken. Minn. Stat. 216B.44 requires the municipality to pay the losing utility damages for its loss. This statute sets forth a 4-Prong damage calculation that usually ends up focusing primarily on the depreciated cost of the infrastructure being lost and loss of revenue for an appropriate period of time. Interpretation of this statute and the appropriate calculation of damages has led to much litigation during the past few decades between municipalities and rural electric cooperatives. Efforts to find a legislative fix to this inequitable law in the urban-controlled legislature, has proven to be unsuccessful in recent years.

Last fall/winter, Tri-County Hospital announced plans to build a new hospital campus on the outskirts of Wadena. The land they were targeting fell partially within Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's protected service territory and a portion was within the City's service territory. The City expressed its intent to annex our rural electric cooperative's service territory in this area. Since then, the City and Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative have each retained separate legal counsel and expert witnesses to analyze the appropriate damage compensation due to the co-op for loss of this service opportunity. At some point, this issue will likely be reported in the local news and it is hard to predict the degree of accuracy that will be associated with the reporting. Rest assured that management and the Board of Directors at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative are committed to ensuring that the statutory damage formula is followed and that the best interest of our members is reflected in this damage payment.

Losing service territory and failing to improve line density is one of the challenges that we face in operating a rural electric cooperative. We will do everything we can to protect the interests of our co-op members against this and other challenges.



Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO

Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO

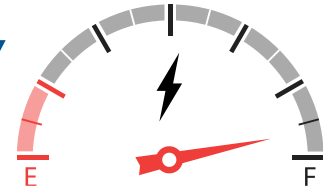
NEW!

Highlights from the June 30th, 2020, regular board meeting:

- Directors reviewed and approved the list of committee members for TWEC's 2021 Nominating Committee.
- Headquarters building progress and the updated project budget were reviewed.
- CEO Dan Carlisle updated the board on the cooperative's COVID-19 plan. The office will remain closed; Member Services, Finance, and Administration departments will continue to work from home; and the Operations department is working at full capacity.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the May financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 0.4 percent under budget. Energy revenue was 0.5 percent under budget. May's purchased power expense was 2.2 percent over budget. Tier is 2.52 and Equity is 44.36.
- Member Services Manager Allison Uselman shared updates on the status of a prepay program and the 'Sota Grown project. The annual Co-op Strong event with West Central Telephone Association will be a drive-through event this year due to COVID-19.
- Operations Manager Todd Miller discussed new services, inventory, outages, and SIP goals for 2020.
- Graba-Meech updated the board on past due accounts due to COVID-19, TWEC's collections process, and the Paycheck Protection Program.
- Board Member Mike Thorson presented the Great River Energy (GRE) report. Project Phoenix received a majority vote and will be moving forward.
- Board Chair Miles Kuschel shared with the board the results of area cooperatives' director elections. He plans to attend a webinar with advice about holding an annual meeting during the pandemic.

CHOOSE YOUR WAY—PREPAY

Take control of your electricity use with prepaid billing!



Prepaid billing, or purchasing electricity before you use it, allows you to manage your budget—paying in as much as you want at whatever time works best for you.

Traditionally, a utility bill is received at the beginning of the month for all of the electricity used in the previous month. With **CHOOSE YOUR WAY—PREPAY**, you purchase electricity before you use it, and your usage and account balance are calculated daily.

You can track your usage and balance by phone or online with your SmartHub account. There is no deposit required to set up a prepaid account. An initial payment of \$50 is

required to set up your prepaid account. After that, pay as much or as little as you like (see payment guidelines below).

A good analogy for this program is putting gas in your car—you pay for the gas before you use it. You could purchase small amounts every few days, or choose to “fill up” the tank and not worry about it for several weeks (depending on how much driving you do).

CHOOSE YOUR WAY-PREPAY is a great program for TWEC members who want to take control of their energy use and electric account(s). Members are responsible for monitoring their electric accounts via SmartHub and will not receive a monthly bill.

CHOOSE YOUR WAY-PREPAY allows you to choose how much and how often you want to pay before you use electricity, putting you in control!

FAQ // CHOOSE YOUR WAY-PREPAY

How does it work?

You purchase electricity before you use it. When your account runs low, you receive an alert by text message or email that lets you know it's time to reload your account. Balance notifications will be sent daily once the account reaches a balance of \$20 or less. Participating members will not receive a monthly bill. You are in complete control of and responsible for monitoring your PrePay balance through SmartHub.

What if my account runs out?

If funds in your account run out, electric service will be disconnected. You will be notified that the service will be disconnected unless you recharge your account. If funds are depleted on the prepaid account, a signal will be sent to the electric meter for automatic disconnection. A disconnected account will be automatically reconnected as soon as any outstanding balance is paid and at least \$50 is added to the account.

How do I make payments?

Payments can be made through SmartHub, over the phone through our interactive voice response line at (877) 999-3398, by mail, or in person at the Todd-Wadena Electric

Cooperative office (our lobby is currently closed to the public due to COVID-19). A minimum payment of \$15 for credit/debit card or \$5 for cash/check are required per transaction.

2020 Member Service Programs

Off-Peak Water Heating

Program	Member Cost/Rebate	Details
Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) Water Heater Program	\$330* for 85 gallon Marathon \$420* for 105 gallon Marathon Non-Marathon-\$400 cash rebate (must be at least 85 gallons)	Low 4.3¢ kWh rate (plus \$2/mo meter fee) Must enroll in the ETS Water Heater Storage program. *New program enrollment only.
Peak Shaved Water Heating	\$330* for 85 gallon Marathon \$420* for 105 gallon Marathon Non-Marathon-\$400 cash rebate (must be at least 85 gallons)	\$8/month credit after 36 months for new construction or gas switching. \$8/month credit after 60 months for existing electric to controlled electric.
Existing Controlled Replacement	\$100 cash rebate	Must provide receipt. Total gallons must equal at least 85 gallons.

Off-Peak Space Heating

Program	Rebate	Details
Slab Heat/Dual Heat	\$35/kW	Up to 10 kW/\$350
Plenum Heater (New DH only)	\$500	Must install at least 10 kW
Quality Installed Air Source Heat Pump (QI contractor required for rebate)	\$480 \$580 \$630	SEER 14.5 SEER 15 SEER 16
Ground Source Heat Pump	\$400/ton	Must be Energy Star rated
Storage Heat	\$50/kW	Up to 10 kW/\$500

Appliances

Program	Rebate	Details
Freezer/Refrigerator (with recycling)	\$75	Must be Energy Star rated
Clothes Dryer	\$25	Must be Energy Star rated
Dehumidifier	\$25	Must be Energy Star rated
Ductless ASHP	\$300 (if delivered fuel is primary heating source) \$500 (if electric is primary heating source)	Must be Energy Star rated
A/C tune up	\$25	Documentation by contractor
EC motor	\$50	Invoice & specs from installer
Wi-Fi Thermostat	\$25	Must be Wi-Fi Smart Thermostat

Electric Vehicles

Program	Rebate	Details
Charge Wise	\$500	Rebate is to be used towards installation of electric vehicle charger. Must enroll in an electric vehicle rate.

Bulbs

Program	Rebate	Details
LED Bulbs	\$2/bulb	Proof of Energy Star rating. Rebate cannot exceed 50% of purchase price.
LED Yard Light Rebate	\$30/fixture	Proof of Energy Star rating (min. 50 watt LED).



Comparing Our Water Heating Programs

How does Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's new Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) Water Heating program compare to our Peak Shaved Water Heating program? Let's investigate!

Our **Peak Shaved Water Heating program** controls water heaters several hours at a time when electric use and wholesale cost are at their highest. Members receive an \$8 credit every month after being on the program for 60 months (only 36 months for new construction or gas switching).

Our **ETS Water Heating program** heats water during off-peak hours (10 p.m.–6 a.m.), when electric costs are the lowest. It stores enough hot water during the off-peak period to last through the 16-hour on-peak portion of the day (*best for smaller households*). Members receive a special storage heat rate of 4.3¢/kWh for water heating (plus a \$2/mo meter fee**).

Monthly Cost Comparison

Based on 350 kWh of water heating usage.

Peak Shaved Rate:	\$0.114/kWh* <i>(with \$8/mo credit)</i>
Water Heating Monthly Total:	\$31.90

* GENERAL SUMMER RATE
(not including the Power Cost Adjustment).

Electric Thermal Storage Rate:	\$0.043/kWh <i>(with \$2/mo charge)</i>
Water Heating Monthly Total:	\$17.05

** A separate meter is required for the ETS water heating program. TWEC provides the socket. Members will need to contact their electrician to wire it.

Explore Your Energy Usage With SmartHub

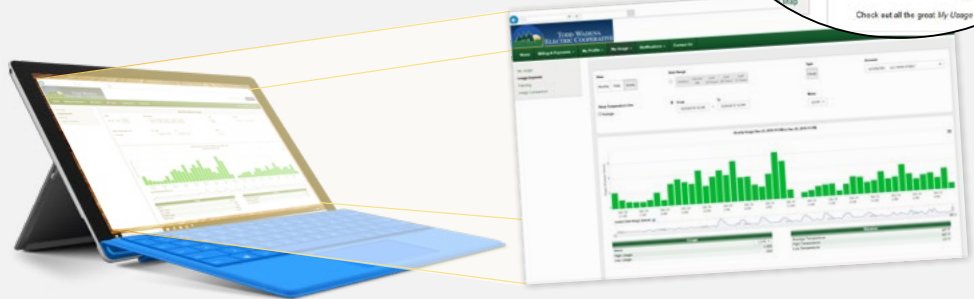
Did you know that you have the ability to investigate your kWh usage? SmartHub, a free online tool and mobile app available to all Todd-Wadena members, gives you the ability to view your electrical energy usage at monthly, daily, or hourly intervals for any date range.

You can also overlay an average temperature line over your usage to compare spikes to temperature fluctuations.

This is a great tool to help explain energy usage on your bill and assist you in making informed decisions about energy use. Visit our website and click on the "SmartHub" button to get started!

Where to Find Your Energy Usage

1. Log into SmartHub
2. Under the *My Usage* tab, click on Usage Explorer
3. View monthly, daily, or hourly usage and choose a pre-defined date range (*unbilled, current bill, last 24 hours, last 48 hours, last 72 hours*), or a specific date range and time.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Installing a smart power strip is a quick and easy way to start saving money while making your home more energy efficient. Smart power strips can actually cut power off to save energy since they are able to detect when a device is in standby mode.



Source: energy.gov

2019 Capital Credit Allocation SEE YOUR INVESTMENT IN THE CO-OP!

Look for your 2019 capital credit allocation in this month's bills. Capital credit earnings are the members' share of the net margins of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative.

- TWEC reinvests that money in the cooperative for operating capital, necessary reserves, storm damages, construction, and many other general expenses.
- In the long-term, those credits are stored, representing your investment in the co-op, and are eventually paid back to members.
- The decision to refund capital credits rests solely on your board of directors, is dependent on the financial conditions of the cooperative, and is subject to Rural Utility Services (RUS) and other lending institutions' regulations.

Please notify us with any changes to your address and contact information so you can continue to receive your refunds.

Individuals with Unclaimed Capital Credits from over Seven Years

Unclaimed capital credits will go to the 2021 scholarship fund if not claimed.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Ahlgren, James O | France, William L | Olson, Mark A |
| Anderson, Gene M | Giesen, Merlin D | OT Repair |
| Anderson, Jean M | Gmyrek, Laurie J | Peterson, Randy J |
| Anderson, Paul M | Hattaway, Deborah A | Peterson, Rhonda K |
| Austin, Randi J | Herr, Leonard E | Poppen, Berdell F |
| Beavers, Geneia L | Hietala, Judy C | Rautio, Susan M |
| Bjorke, Mark D | Hillig, Dale | Reynolds, L. G |
| Bratsch, Donald M | Iverson, Lauren J | Rockwell, Janeane M |
| Bridger, James K | Jenkins, Sharon R | Rosenquist, Lois E |
| Brolsma, Richard W | Johnson, Scott C | Sabourin, Robert H |
| Buermann, Vernon P | Larson, Jerry F | Savarese, Vincent J |
| Casarez, James | Lembke Estate, Joyce L | Scarbrough, Ken L |
| Christensen, Scott P | Leritz, Stephen C | Scott, Steven J |
| Chromey, Edward M | Manley, Dale W | Seelye, Walter S |
| Connolly, William C | Marshall, Bruce L | Serie, Dennis P |
| Costner, Mari C | McCall, Terry L | Shepersky, Bruce A |
| Davis, Robert M | McGuire, Gloria L | Sielaff, David R |
| Dechaine, Todd A | Meek Truck Line LLC | Streck, Lanae M |
| Delfosse, Larry D | Mickelson, Eric L | Suhl, Christina A |
| Digiovanni, Caroline A | Mills, Angela M | Suhl, Shannon S |
| Draayer, Donnel | Mittelstadt, Regina B | Swank, David J |
| Dragon, Kenneth P | Mohr, Ambrose H | Thom, Curtis E |
| Drong, Rosie D | Molina, Sherry J | Thornberg, Melvin R |
| Eagle Pattern & Model Inc. | Morrow, Jon I | Thurston, Carol J |
| Finck, Dallas W | Moses, Jan M | Traynor, Thomas |
| Fisher, Cecil J | Myrum, Randall K | Treinen, Clifford S |
| Fisher, Dorothy | Nelson, Roger N | Weilage, Susan K |
| Fleck, Charlie R | Nelson, Rosina E | Williams, Brian A |
| Foley, Thomas H | Neumann Estate, Roderick J | Winter-Holm, Brent J |

Fallen Trees on Power Lines



From July Storms

Progress Continues on New Headquarters Building



Note: Office will be closed September 7th for Labor Day.

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**CO-OP
STRONG**



**DRIVE THROUGH LUNCH ON
FRIDAY, AUGUST 14TH, 2020**

*11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Central Lakes College
1830 Airport Road, Staples (south parking lot)*

Drive through the south parking lot at the Central Lakes College (CLC) campus in Staples for a free lunch! We will be serving pulled pork, chips, and water in an insulated lunch bag.

The event is put on by **Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative** and **West Central Telephone Association**.



WE APPRECIATE OUR MEMBERS!



**Operation
Round
Up Grant
Application
Deadline**

The next deadline to submit an Operation Round Up grant application is **September 15th**. All local, nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. The Trust Board then reviews the applications and determines grant awards.

More information and application forms are available at www.toddwadena.coop under the “Our Community” tab or receive a form by stopping in our office or calling us for a copy at (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321-8932.

**Get Your Photo Submissions
in for Our 2021 Calendar**

We are continuing to accept photos from members for the Cooperative’s 2021 calendar. We are looking for scenic photos (wildlife or landscape) that represent the four seasons of Minnesota.

From the entries received, we’ll select 13 photos – one for each month of the year plus one for the cover. Members whose photos are included in the calendar will receive a \$20 credit on their TWEC account.*



Contest Rules

1. Submit your digital photos (up to 5 per member) to kvandventer@toddwadena.coop by September 25th, 2020. Be sure to send the photographer’s name, TWEC service address, and phone number with the photo.
2. Photos must depict a Minnesota scene (wildlife or landscape) with a horizontal view. Representations of all four seasons are needed. Color photos are preferred. Extra consideration will be given to photos within the TWEC service area.
3. **IMPORTANT:** Photos must be high quality (300 dpi or higher) for an 8 x 10 inch landscape production.
4. Winning photos may be used in future cooperative publications.

**Must have an active TWEC account to participate.*

Pine to Prairie News

A monthly publication for
members and friends of



TODD-WADENA
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

www.toddwadena.coop

Office Hours: 8:00am - 4:30pm
Monday - Friday

Telephone: (218) 631-3120 or
(800) 321-8932

Email: todd-wad@toddwadena.coop

Address: 550 Ash Avenue NE
P.O. Box 431
Wadena, MN 56482

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Tom Brichacek, Vice Chair
Marie Katterhagen, Secretary
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Michael Thorson, Director
Gene Kern, Director
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Daniel Carlisle, President/CEO

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Todd County:

Troy Bak (320) 760-1017

Wadena County:

Gary Zacharias (218) 631-1392

District 5 (Todd County):

Mark Hunter (320) 616-5574

District 6 (Wadena County):

Sheldon Monson (218) 689-3260



If your electric power goes out:

First, make sure the problem is not on your side. (Members may be billed for service calls if the problem is caused by their own equipment.) Check fuses and circuit breakers in your home and by the meter pole. (Call us for help, if necessary.)

Second, check with your neighbors to see if they have power. Then call Todd-Wadena to report the problem. Give your name and account number. Then report any tree branches, twisted wires, broken poles, and whether or not your neighbors are also out of power.

Before digging call:

Gopher State One-Call
811 or (800) 252-1166

Find us on  

www.facebook.com/toddwadanaelectriccooperative
www.instagram.com/twec.coop

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 431

Wadena, MN 56482

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Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's lobby is currently closed to the public. Employees are back in the office and answering phones during normal business hours, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Any calls after hours will be directed to our after-hours answering service.

August Reader's Contest ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY AUGUST 25TH, 2020.

For your chance to be entered in a drawing to win a **\$10 credit** on your bill, correctly answer the questions and include with your TWEC bill. Mail to TWEC, P.O. Box 431, Wadena, MN 56482. Or email the answers to kvandeventer@toddwadena.coop with the subject line "Reader's Contest". Be sure to include your name and TWEC service address.

1. Join TWEC and WCTA for a free _____-through lunch on Friday August 14th.
2. The 2nd part of the Bifurcated Annual Meeting will be held on Friday, September _____ at the Long Prairie Drive-In Theater.
3. Members can submit up to five _____ for the 2021 calendar contest.

Name:

Your TWEC Service Address:

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David Folkestad of Wadena is the July Reader's Contest winner.