

Pine to Prairie News

Co-op Strong Drive-Through Lunch a Success

On Friday, August 14th, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC) and West Central Telephone Association (WCTA) hosted the third annual Co-op Strong Lunch for their members at Central Lakes College in Staples. Due to COVID-19, the co-ops decided to host a drive-through lunch. Approximately 650 meals were served to co-op members. Each meal consisted of a pulled pork sandwich prepared by *Bubba's BBQ Pit* of Nimrod, chips, water, and a reusable lunch bag handed out to members. It was great to see our members!



Join Us for Part 2 of Our Bifurcated Annual Meeting

Drive on over and join us for the second half of our bifurcated annual meeting! We are holding the meeting at the Long Drive-In Theater in Long Prairie. The drive-in theater opens at 6 p.m.; members are encouraged to come early for concessions and to bring 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!* Please note that masks are required inside the concessions area. Make sure to **bring your ticket** with you (*located on the back page!*)



When: Friday, September 18th

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

FIND YOUR TICKET ON BACK PAGE →

New Headquarters will be Served by TWEC

After months of hard work, we are nearing the end of construction on Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's new headquarters building. In conjunction with building the new facility, we took a look at all possible efficiencies and changes in operations.

One efficiency that was evident was a decision to provide our own electric service for the building, rather than continuing to receive our electric service from the City of Wadena. Extensive research has revealed that TWEC will be able to save our members money by serving ourselves.

Todd-Wadena's right to make this decision is protected by Minnesota Statute 216B.40 – *Exclusive Service Right; Service Extension*. The statute allows for this type of extension "...if the extension is necessary to facilitate the electric utility connecting its facilities..."

Through our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), TWEC is able to enroll in an interruptible rate. An interruptible rate can offer significant rate savings because the member agrees that GRE can control the load during energy peaking times. By shaving energy use during the peak time when it is most expensive, GRE can purchase energy at much lower prices. This results in lower rates. Enrolling in the interruptible rate for our new headquarters building results in a rate that is nearly half of what TWEC currently pays to power our facility.

The significant savings an interruptible rate will provide guided our decision to invest in our own distribution line to our headquarters. Approximately one mile of underground line will run from a line connected to our Hewitt substation to the new headquarters building. The installation of this line will allow Todd-Wadena to begin serving our own energy needs. We also purchased a generator to serve as a back-up power source to ensure reliable service and to make the interruptible rate possible.

Throughout the construction process, we continue to look for ways to serve our members as safely and efficiently as possible. We are thankful for the opportunity to save our members money and are looking forward to serving our own energy needs at the new headquarters building.



Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO

Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO



Highlights from the July 24th, 2020, regular board meeting:

- Board Chair Miles Kuschel provided highlights from the MREA District 3 meeting that was held remotely. Topics discussed included: CFC delegates, REPAC, PPP loan, MREA due increases, the MPCA request, and a review of what other cooperatives are doing for their annual meetings.
- CEO Dan Carlisle presented the board with two action items. First, a decision was made to vote in favor of CFC bylaw changes allowing for remote meetings and individuals attending remotely to count toward meeting the quorum requirements. Second, the Cobank ballot was asking for TWEC's vote on the 2020 delegate. The board approved a motion to vote for David Kragnes as the 2020 Delegate Elect.
- Carlisle also updated the board on a recent Great River Energy (GRE) member managers group meeting he attended for CEOs. The group discussed the potential 3-tier flexible contract with GRE, the upcoming strategic planning meeting, and conversation continued about creating a formula to calculate a buy-out agreement.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the June financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 7 percent over budget. Energy revenue was 7 percent over budget. June's purchased power expense was 21 percent over budget. Tier is 2.37 and Equity is 44.18.
- Member Services Manager Allison Uselman mentioned how the demand response unit (DRU) change out project will commence in 2021. Pre-approval was given for the ordering of DRU equipment and the hiring of an additional electrician. Updates were also provided on the 'Sota Grown project and the No Control Irrigation Pilot program.
- Operations Manager Todd Miller discussed the many storms that recently went through the area. Most of the outages were due to trees on the line and lightning damage. Some linemen also assisted a neighboring cooperative with damages.
- Graba-Meech updated the board on the Lost Penalty Summary due to COVID-19.
- Board Member Mike Thorson began the GRE report by sharing the monthly and year-to-date financials. June was a very successful month; numbers came in substantially over budget, due to weather and residents being home more. GRE plans to extend an additional \$3 million in credits to cooperatives to help offset their costs from COVID-19.
- Board Member Dale Adams and CEO Dan Carlisle attended the recent STAR Energy board meeting. Carlisle was elected as the board chair.

Discount for TWEC Members for Locating Private Facilities

Members of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative are now able to receive a special discount on private locating services. While utility-owned electric wires are located for free when calling 811—*Gopher State One Call*, member-owned private facilities such as underground electric wires and gas lines to outbuildings, electric fence, sprinkler systems, septic systems, and similar underground items are **not marked**. Arrangements must be made with a private utility locator to mark those.

To make it easier for TWEC members who might need private facilities located, Johnson Locating Service (JLS) has agreed to a reduced rate for private locates *if they are called immediately* after Gopher State One Call is notified. This allows JLS to do the private locate at the same time as they mark the utility's lines.

For more information, contact Jeff Johnson at JLS by calling (218) 821-7672 — payment is due at time of locate.

Planning a Digging Project?

1. You must notify Gopher State One Call at least 48 hours in advance of digging (*excluding weekends and holidays*).
2. If a private locate is needed, call Johnson Locating Service immediately after contacting Gopher State One Call, and they will provide you with a discounted rate for the private locate (*payment is due at time of locate*).



Headquarters Construction Progress

Construction on the new headquarters building continues to progress well. Windows have been installed, insulation is in place, mechanical and electrical work is in progress, and sheetrocking is underway now. Outside the building, the **block work in front is almost complete**, siding and soffits are done, and concrete pours for curbs and sign foundation are being finished up. The project should be fully completed before the end of the year.



FRONT ENTRY IS NEARLY COMPLETE!

Last Chance to Submit Photos for 2021 Calendar

Make sure to submit your photos for the Cooperative's 2021 calendar before the **deadline on September 25th**. We are looking for scenic photos (wildlife or landscape) that represent the four seasons of Minnesota.

We're selecting 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 (*must have an active TWEC account to participate*).

Contest Rules

1. Submit your digital photos (up to 5 per member) to kvandeventer@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.



Prepare Your Home for Cold Weather

Fall and winter are just around the corner, which makes now the perfect time to prepare your home for the inevitable colder weather. There are some simple steps you can take now that might prevent surprise repairs during an inconvenient time of the year, and even save you some money on heating costs.



Check Heating Fuels

Don't wait for the first snow fall to realize you're out of propane, oil, dry firewood, etc. Check your levels now to be sure you're well prepared, and take advantage of pre-season discounts! If you use wood, make sure it is dry, seasoned firewood - using "green" wood increases your risk of a chimney fire.

Don't Forget About the Attic, Windows, and Doors

Sealing cracks and making sure your attic is properly insulated will not only help save you money in heating costs, it could help reduce your risk of an ice dam. Ice dams form when water located around the eaves of

your roof is allowed to freeze. This forms icicles and literal dams of ice, preventing further snow melt and water from rolling off the roof. That collecting water runs into your walls and ceilings, causing severe damage inside your home. Proper insulation will help keep the eaves clear of icicles and ice dams.

Check Smoke and CO Detectors

With the winter heating season nearing, make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working and have fresh batteries. You'll want them to work properly in the event of a life-threatening problem with your heating and/or ventilation system.

NOTICE: CURRENT DUAL FUEL MEMBERS

If you are a current dual fuel member, **NOW** is the time to make sure your backup heating source is **working properly** and your alternate fuel source is **at an adequate level** (i.e. your propane tank is full). If service is needed, schedule the work to be done soon with your local heating contractor.

Rebates and Low Rates Available with Dual Fuel Heating

ELECTRIC PLENUM HEATER

Go dual fuel by inserting an electric plenum heater into a new or existing fossil fuel furnace. Air is heated as it flows across electric elements and is distributed through existing duct work. In addition to low electricity rates, Todd-Wadena members receive a \$500 rebate towards the purchase of a plenum heater (**new program enrollment only**). If you are interested in this type of dual fuel system, contact your local heating contractor first to see if a plenum heater would work with your existing fossil fuel furnace.



RATES

Todd-Wadena offers its members a low dual fuel heating rate of just **5.1¢ per kWh**. It is a requirement of the dual heat program to have a non-electric, automatic backup heat system that is large enough to heat the whole house (i.e. propane, fuel oil, or natural gas).

REBATES

- \$35/kW (up to 10kW) for installing electric, non-storage, in-floor heating.
- \$50/kw (up to 10 kw) for storage heat such as Storage furnaces
- \$500 for installing a plenum heater. **New program enrollment only/10kW minimum.**
- \$400/ton for installing an Energy Star rated ground source heat pump.
- \$480 to \$630 (*varies by SEER rating*) for installing an air source heat pump. **Rebates available only through QI installer program.**
- \$300-\$500 for installing a ductless air source heat pump. Must be Energy Star rated.

Limited Time Savings at Online Store



Take advantage of our 50% off water savers deal at www.energywisemnstore.com!



Our online store allows you to shop and save on energy efficient products from the comfort of your home. There are smart home devices, including wi-fi thermostats, electric vehicle chargers, LED bulbs, power saving powerstrips, water savers, and more!

For your convenience, all available rebates are automatically applied. Shop now at www.energywisemnstore.com and through September 30th take advantage of the 50% off water savers deal!

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

If you need help paying your electric bills, you may qualify for energy assistance. For complete qualifications and application information, contact your local Social Services or Community Action Council (CAC).

Energy Assistance By County

Becker, Hubbard, Otter Tail, & Wadena (Mahube OTWA)

(218) 847-1385 or (888) 458-1385 (*Detroit Lakes*)
(218) 739-3011 (*Fergus Falls*)
(218) 632-3600 (*Wadena*)
(218) 732-7204 (*Park Rapids*)

Cass (Bi-Cap) Beltrami

(218) 547-3438 or (800) 332-7135 (*Walker Office - Satellite*)
(218) 751-4631 or (800) 332-7161 (*Bemidji Office*)

Morrison (Tri-Cap) Stearns, Benton, Sherburne

(320) 251-1612 or (888) 765-5597

Todd

(320) 732-4516 or (888) 838-4066

Douglas (West Central Minnesota Communities Action)

(218) 685-4486 or (800) 492-4805

Cold Weather Rule

Each year, some members are unable to pay their electric bill during cold weather months. The *Minnesota Cold Weather Rule* was established to protect residential members from electrical service disconnection between October 15th and April 15th.

Cold Weather Rule protection is available if the following conditions exist:

- The disconnection would affect your main heating source
- You and Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative agree on a payment plan
- You have returned the Cold Weather Rule form to TWEC

**Cold Weather Rule form will be mailed with all October bills.*

The Cold Weather Rule does not prevent winter disconnections. If you have a DISCONNECTION NOTICE on your bill between October 15th and April 15th, you must act before the disconnect date on the bill.

TO AVOID DISCONNECTION BETWEEN OCTOBER 15TH AND APRIL 15TH YOU MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

1. Set Up a Payment Plan

If you receive a disconnect notice on your bill, you must call and set up a mutually agreed upon monthly payment plan before the disconnect date on the bill. This payment plan must be kept current to be protected by the Cold Weather Rule and avoid disconnection.

2. Return the CWR Form

Complete the Cold Weather Rule form and return it to TWEC before the disconnect date on your bill. You may complete this form online at www.toddwadena.coop.

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

Nominate a Local, Worthy Organization for an Award

We are now accepting applications for the Minnesota Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Community Award! If you know an organization that has made outstanding contributions to our community, please nominate them!

Each fall, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative seeks nominations for the cooperative's Touchstone Energy Community Award. The award recognizes community groups or organizations that have made significant contributions to the local community. The winning organization will be presented with a plaque and a cash award of \$500 for its cause. All local winners contend for a statewide prize of \$1,000, a beautiful award, and a hotel stay to be in attendance for the statewide award presentation.

Applications must be received by October 30th, 2020.

2019 Winner: Wadena Boy Scout Troop 54



Award Eligibility: Organizations or individuals that have served a community need within the Todd and Wadena County service area are eligible.

Application Form: Print, complete, and submit the application form available at www.toddwadena.coop. Providing a description of the project, program, or event and the positive impact it has brought to the community is required. Send additional pages, photos, etc., if necessary.

Deadline: Applications need to be received by Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative on or before October 30th, 2020.

Questions: Contact Kallie Van De Venter at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative.

Address: P.O. Box 431, Wadena, MN 56482
Phone: (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321-8932
Email: kvandeventer@toddwadena.coop

Operation Round Up Application Deadline

Reminder: the deadline for organizations to submit an Operation Round Up grant application is approaching soon. Applications must be received by **September 15th, 2020.**



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

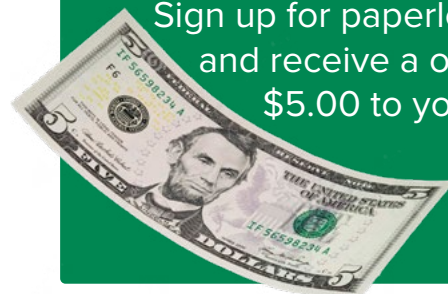
Clothes dryers make up a large portion of your appliance energy consumption. Clean the lint filter after each cycle, and scrub the filter with a toothbrush once a month to remove film and increase air circulation.

Source: energy.gov



Go Paperless and **Get Five** **\$5**

Sign up for paperless via SmartHub and receive a one-time credit of \$5.00 to your account!



New paperless enrollment only. Offer ends December 31st, 2020.

READER'S CONTEST

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. Entries must be received by September 25th.

Maureen Yanta of Menahga is the August Reader's Contest winner.

1. Make sure to bring your _____ on the back page with you to the second part of the Bifurcated Annual Meeting.
2. If you are a current dual fuel member, make sure your _____ heating source is working properly.
3. Keep farm equipment at least _____ feet away from power lines.



Name:

Your TWEC Service Address:

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Tips for a Safe Harvest



Harvest season brings hard work and can be exhausting, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous (even deadly!) when working near overhead power lines. We urge farm operators and workers to keep the following safety tips in mind:



Use care when operating large machinery near power lines.



Inspect the height of equipment to determine clearance.



Always keep equipment at least 10 feet away (in all directions) from power lines.



Remember to lower extensions when moving loads.



If a power line is sagging or looks to be dangerously low, please call us immediately.

Harvest Season Safety

Harvest season is approaching rapidly. We want you to stay safe and stay alive! Be aware of your surroundings and look up for overhead power lines. Equipment contacting overhead power lines is the leading cause of farm electrocution accidents in the Midwest. A large percentage of these accidents happen near grain bins when grain augers are being moved and come in contact with overhead power lines, creating a direct path to ground for electricity.

Keep safety in mind when moving tractors with loaders, augers, and vehicles with tall antennas. It's best to use a spotter to ensure contact is not made with a line when moving large equipment or tall loads. Keep farm equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines.

What to do if farm equipment or vehicles come in contact with power lines:

- ✓ In most cases, it is best to remain inside the cab or vehicle and call your local electrical utility or 911. If the line is energized, stepping out of the vehicle and contacting the ground can create a path to the ground for electricity—resulting in deadly consequences.
- ✓ Warn others who may try to help you to **STAY BACK** until the electric utility arrives and disconnects power to the line.
- ✓ If the vehicle or equipment you are in starts on fire, the proper action would be to jump out with both feet together, and as far from the vehicle or equipment as possible. Continue to hop, keeping both feet together as you leave the area. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the vehicle or equipment and the ground at the same time.
- ✓ Once away from the area, prevent others from going near it until the electric utility gives permission to do so.

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A monthly publication for
members and friends of



TODD-WADENA
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

www.toddwadena.coop

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Monday - Friday

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TICKET

Bifurcated Annual Meeting: Part 2

When:

Friday, September 18th

6:00 p.m. // Drive-In Opens

7:45 p.m. // Business Meeting

8:00 p.m. // Movie Starts

Where:

Long Drive-In Theater

24257 Riverside Drive

Long Prairie, MN 56347

**PLEASE BRING
THIS TICKET
WITH YOU.**

