



Pine to Prairie News

New Logo for Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

We are excited to announce that Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative will soon have a new logo to lead the Cooperative into the future.

The logo depicts a universal symbol for energy—a lightning bolt—simplified to its foundational shape. The bolt is composed of two overlapping elements, representing TWEC's focus on members and concern for community.

At the September board meeting, TWEC's Board of Directors officially approved the new design. For the past 20 years, TWEC's current logo has served the Cooperative well. With the construction of the new headquarters building, it was an ideal time to update the logo to best represent Todd-Wadena going forward. The Board and staff put a lot of effort and thought into selecting a logo that best represents the Cooperative and members.



Todd-Wadena
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Over the next few months, Todd-Wadena will update the logo on all the fleet, on the Cooperative's communications materials, and on social media. The sign outside the new headquarters building will also prominently feature the new logo.

"This year has been a year of change and, along with you and your families, your Board of Directors has also been dealing with a great amount of change. With every decision we make, we resolve to make

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative better, stronger, and more focused on you—the member," says TWEC Board Chair Miles Kuschel.

"When tasked with the decision to move forward with a new logo, we wanted it to represent the commitment that we have to our members," Kuschel continues. "This new logo represents our continued focus on our members and concern for community, while also symbolizing what we do—providing safe and reliable energy."

Drive-in Meeting & Movie a Success

The second part of the Bifurcated Annual Meeting was held at the Long Drive-in Theater in Long Prairie on Friday, September 18th. Over 120 members were in attendance.

A pre-recorded video of the CEO and Board Chair report was shown prior to the

movie *Grease*. Members in attendance received a ticket for a free pop/water, popcorn, and candy at the concessions stands.

This was a great opportunity to remain socially distanced but also interact with our members by hosting a drive-in meeting.



Addressing California Blackouts

At the end of the summer, a record-breaking heat wave hit California causing the state's three biggest utilities to cut power to hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses for about an hour at a time. I've received questions from our members asking if this type of situation could occur in our state, and I'd like to share the response Great River Energy's President & CEO David Saggau issued recently.

Saggau addresses some key differences between California and Minnesota and emphasizes the strength of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) electricity market. Great River Energy, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's wholesale power provider, has been a MISO market participant since 2005.

Daniel Carlisle, TWEC President/CEO



Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO

Rolling blackouts in California have been making headlines and sparking questions across the country, particularly in regions such as the Midwest that are seeing rapid renewable energy growth. Great River Energy and many of our member-owners are receiving the same question: "Could this happen here?"

There is a fundamental difference between California and Minnesota that makes our situations quite different: California's dependence on solar energy. Rolling blackouts are occurring shortly after sundown when solar resources stop generating while temperatures remain high and air conditioner use continues. Solar energy makes up a very small percentage of the generating resources in MISO, so the region does not experience sharp drop-offs in energy production associated with widespread reliance on solar generating resources.

As a member of MISO, we must have sufficient generating capacity to meet our members' peak load plus reserves. Great River Energy's generating capacity is, and will always be, more than sufficient to provide reliable service and meet MISO requirements.

We have a fleet of modern natural gas plants in Minnesota that provide all-hours reliability. Most of these plants have on-site backup fuels. We have also built new transmission across the region to ensure energy can be delivered to our members. And, in partnership with member-owner cooperatives, we have developed one of the country's most robust demand response programs which allows us to effectively reduce electric loads during extreme conditions.



Great River Energy has the resources we need to ensure reliable electricity for our members.

David Saggau, Great River Energy President & CEO

Highlights from the August 25th, 2020, regular board meeting:

- Board Chair Miles Kuschel provided a recap of the MREA Annual Meeting/Energy Issues Summit that was held in August. He discussed the MREA election results and what other cooperatives' protocols are regarding COVID-19.
- CEO Dan Carlisle discussed a new federal case ruling related to vegetation management, brought up housekeeping/janitorial ideas for the new building, and revisited the secondary locating discussion from last month's board meeting.
- Carlisle also noted his support for a revision to the Bylaws of Minnesota Rural Electric Trust (MRET). The board voted to approve the MRET Bylaw changes and approve Carlisle to vote on behalf of the Cooperative.
- A progress update was provided on the status of the new headquarters building. The project continues to be on schedule.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the July financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 0.6 percent over budget. Energy revenue was 2 percent over budget. July's purchased power expense was 12 percent over budget. Tier is 2.16 and Equity is 43.63.
- TWEC received three Request for Proposals from auditors for either a three- or five-year contract, starting with audit year 2020. After reviewing the proposals, a decision was made to hire Brady Martz for a three-year contract.
- Member Services Manager Allison Uselman presented a language revision to the Economic and Community Development Policy 115. The revision was approved by the board.
- Operations Manager Todd Miller followed up on the secondary locating discussion, noting how Johnson Locating Service has agreed to offer TWEC members the option to have member-owned lines, including other utilities, located.
- Board Member Mike Thorson presented the Great River Energy (GRE) report. Thorson and Carlisle will attend the GRE strategic planning session in September.

The Cooperative Difference

Twenty-four years ago, a member of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative called to ask if he could put my name on the ballot to serve as cooperative director and I said, “No.” I had other things to do, other interests, and thought it would take too much time. He could have accepted that answer and hung up the phone, but he did not. He spent the next hour talking to me about the cooperative and the need to be involved. He would not accept my answer of “no.”

In the 1940s, when rural America wanted electricity and the power companies with a profit motive rather than service motive said “no,” that answer was also not accepted. It was during this time that our nation’s electric cooperatives were formed. Neighbors started talking to neighbors about not only signing up for power, but helping to build lines.

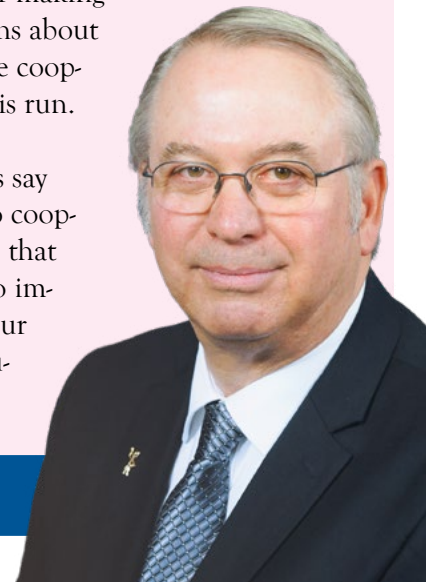
An early cooperative from which we get some of our guiding principles started in Rochdale, England in 1844. They wanted better than the company store that kept them in debt and provided inferior products – products with fillers that would increase weight and profit but reduce quality. The customers would not accept that situation, so they started a store with five items: butter, sugar, flour, oatmeal, and candles. They were soon known for their high-quality products. Those founding members were visionaries who put quality service, and betterment of society, ahead of profits.

For a close-to-home example of the cooperative advantage, I need go no further than my local phone company West Central Telephone. Years ago,

West Central brought fiber optic cable to homes in their service area – including mine. Our internet service was, and still is, far superior to that provided only a few miles away by the for-profit companies. Some of you are currently looking forward to being connected to that improved service that they provide, as they expand outside their original service territory. That small phone company out of Sebeka would not accept the service quality provided by others and set out to be better.

October is *National Cooperative Month*, a time to reflect on the many cooperative businesses in the community that provide us services with a different business model – one that is more about service than profit and focuses on giving back to the community. Here at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, our Operation Round Up program is just one example of a service that provides financial support to many service groups in our communities. By electing our board members from among our membership, we also support the cooperative principle of democratic member control. This means people from within our community are responsible for making decisions about how the cooperative is run.

So, let’s say “yes” to cooperatives that strive to improve our communities!



Dale Adams
TWEC Board Treasurer



We have a fun month lined up here in October to celebrate **National Co-op Month**. Check out all the fun below!

CO-OP MONTH TRIVIA

Follow us on Facebook for *Co-op Month Trivia*. Each Monday in October, a new question will be posted to win a prize or energy credit.

READER'S CONTEST

This month we will be choosing **FIVE Reader's Contest** winners from the October *Pine to Prairie* newsletter.

COLORING CONTEST

Hey kids! Get out your crayons and do your best job coloring this fall coloring page for a chance to win a prize! We are holding a *coloring contest* for co-op kids, 10 years and under. Download the coloring sheet from our website at www.toddwadena.coop

Please mail in your completed coloring sheet or email a photo of the completed masterpiece to mbrservices@toddwadena.coop by October 26th, 2020.



NEW! Receive Dual Fuel Load Control Notifications with SmartHub

Members who participate in our **dual fuel load management program** can now receive a notification of control events! To manage or receive notifications from Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, you will need a SmartHub account.



Set Up Dual Fuel Load Control Notifications

Visit <https://toddwadena.smarthub.coop> and sign in (or create an account). If you haven't previously signed up for any notifications, you will need to take the following two steps:

1 Add Contacts: Click *Notifications* in the navigation menu, then select *Manage Contacts*. Add an email contact and/or a phone contact*. Follow directions and enter verification code where appropriate.

2 Set Up Notifications: Click *Notifications* again, and select *Manage Notifications*. Select *Reports*, then choose *Dual Heat Control*. Click *Options* and select the contact(s) you wish to receive load control notifications.

** To ensure you receive notifications when adding a phone contact, please make sure "No" is selected next to "Place on Do Not Call List".*

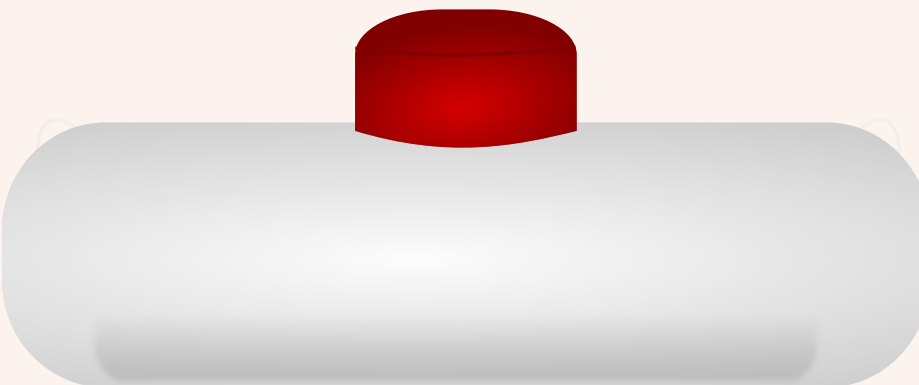
SmartHub

There are two easy ways to access SmartHub: by desktop computer or by a mobile device application. Members can choose to manage notifications in several ways including receiving email, an opt-in to text (SMS) messages via a mobile device, to receive both email and SMS messages, or to be removed from certain announcements entirely.



DUAL FUEL MEMBERS: PLEASE CHECK YOUR BACK-UP SYSTEM

If you have a **Dual Fuel Heating System**, now is the time to be sure your back-up heating system is prepared and that you have adequate fuel supply.



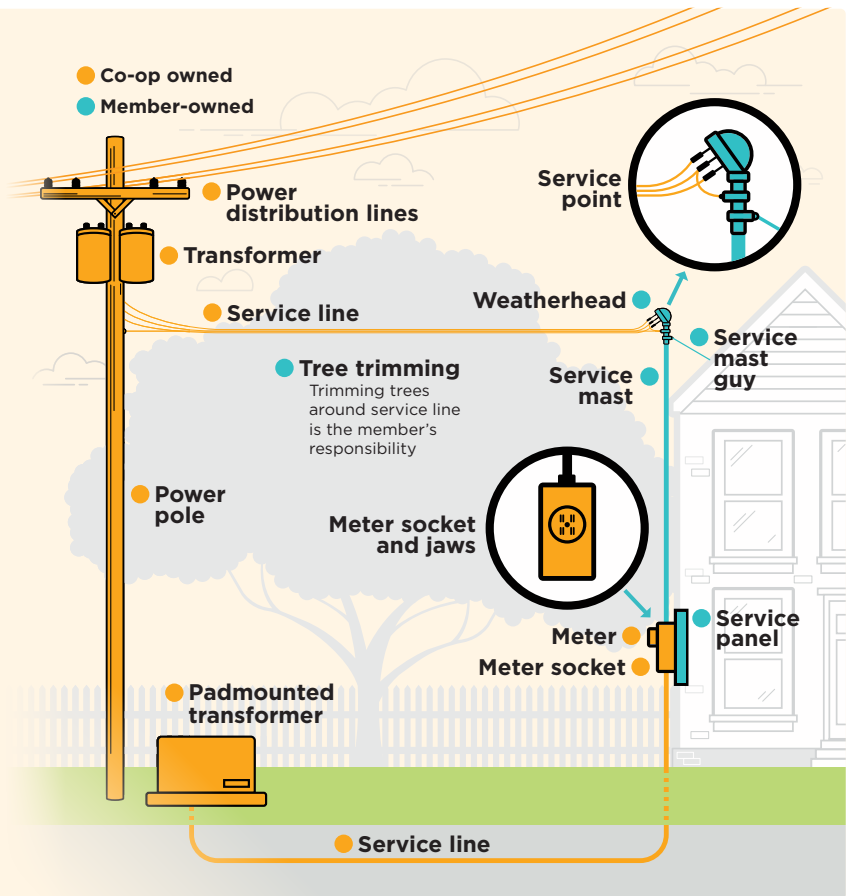
- Dual Fuel Heating Systems are usually controlled during periods of high demand (such as frigid winter evenings), but other factors such as high market cost can lead to load control as well.
- There can be up to 400 hours of control during the heating season. However, most winters the control has averaged 100 to 120 hours.
- It can happen any time of the day, but typically will be during the early evening (4:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.).
- Participants should expect 16-20 control days this winter, with most occurring between December and February.

Who Owns What?

Electric Cooperative Owned Equipment Versus Member-Owned Equipment

This graphic depicts equipment owned by the co-op (in gold) and the member (in blue). If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, we are responsible for repairs. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment. You can purchase *optional* insurance coverage to cover exterior electrical line damage.

Note: This graphic depicts overhead and underground service. Please be aware of which type of service you receive at your home or business.



Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative has partnered with HomeServe to offer **optional** home coverages for our members. *Watch your mailbox for more information!* We value our members and are committed to providing you with safe and reliable electricity.

Many homeowners aren't aware that the exterior electrical lines and certain components on their property are their responsibility, including weatherhead, insulator, riser, meter base, and service entrance conductor. Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is responsible for maintaining all line up to the meter.

If a breakdown to these items occurs, it is up to the member to find an electrician and pay the repair costs. Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative has selected **HomeServe** to offer *optional* Exterior Electrical Line Coverage for our members. Watch your mailbox for additional information soon or go to www.homeserve.com.

Exterior Electrical Line Coverage for Todd-Wadena Cooperative Members



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



The **COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program** provides housing assistance payments to help prevent eviction, prevent homelessness, and maintain housing stability for eligible renters and homeowners. Local administrators will review applications from individuals and families requesting assistance, verify eligibility, and process payments for eligible expenses on behalf of households.

What expenses may be eligible for assistance?

If needed to maintain housing security, avoid displacement, and are past their due date, eligible expenses may include:

- Rent payments
- Mortgage payments (*including escrowed property taxes and insurance in the case of foreclosure prevention*)
- Contract for deed payments
- Manufactured home park lot rents and payments
- Utility payments
- Homeowners Association fees
- Homeowners insurance

How to Apply

Call Toll Free: (800) 543-7709

Visit Online: www.211unitedway.org

Located in Wadena County? Contact Wadena Housing and Redevelopment Authority at (218) 631-7723.

Headquarters Building Nearing Completion

The new headquarters building is nearing final stages of construction. Painting is in full swing, and tile work is being completed in bathrooms. Electrical work is getting close to the finishing stages. Carpet will be put in mid-October. Overall, the project has been progressing on schedule with very few delays and within budget.



Let SmartHub Make Your Life Easier

Make and Manage Payments

SmartHub allows you to make a payment or schedule a future payment on your account by credit card or bank account.

Track Your Energy Usage

SmartHub gives you the ability to view your electrical energy usage on a monthly, daily, or hourly interval. You can compare electrical usage, charges, and temperature differences of any two months, side-by-side, to note seasonal or behavioral changes in usage. By using energy markers, you can track your household energy use over dates where changes occurred, such as implementation of a programmable thermostat or when you have guests stay in your home. This is a great tool to help explain energy usage on your bill and assist you in making informed decisions about energy use.



Enroll in AutoPay

Enroll in automatic bill pay using a bank account or credit card.

Track Your Payment History

The payment history screen is a quick reference for viewing the amount paid, when it was paid, and by what method.

Go Paperless

There is no need to save old billing statements. You can now view the actual bill images on your screen.

Manage Your Notifications

Do you want to know when your bill is available to be paid, if Todd-Wadena received your payment, or if your bill is past due? These are just some of the notifications available to members/owners who want to be notified by email or text message.

Nominate a Local, Worthy Organization for an Award

We are continuing to accept applications for the Minnesota Touchstone Energy Cooperatives 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.

If you know an organization that has made outstanding contributions to our community, please nominate them!

Applications must be received by October 30th, 2020.

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

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The average household owns 24 electronic products, which account for roughly 12% of home energy use. When shopping for electronics, consider purchasing ENERGY STAR®-certified products, which can be 70% more efficient than conventional models.

Source: www.energystar.gov



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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Gene Kern, Director
Kristine Spadgenske, Director

Daniel Carlisle, President/CEO

LOCAL ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS

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/toddwadenelectriccooperative
www.instagram.com/twec.coop

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 431

Wadena, MN 56482

Printed on recycled paper.

PRSR STD
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PAID
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Our lobby is currently closed to the public,
but we are available by appointment only.
Call (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321-8932.

READER'S CONTEST

*To celebrate National Cooperative Month, we are
choosing **FIVE** Reader's Contest winners this month!*

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 October 25th.

1. If you have a _____ fuel heating system, now is the time to be sure your back-up heating system is prepared and that you have adequate fuel supply.
2. If you know a local organization that has made an outstanding contribution to our community, please nominate them for for the Minnesota _____ Energy Cooperative Community Award.
3. TWEC is celebrating co-op month with trivia on Facebook, Reader's Contest, and a _____ contest for kids.

Name: _____

Your TWEC Service Address: _____

Michael J. Kramer of Long Prairie is the September Reader's Contest Winner.