

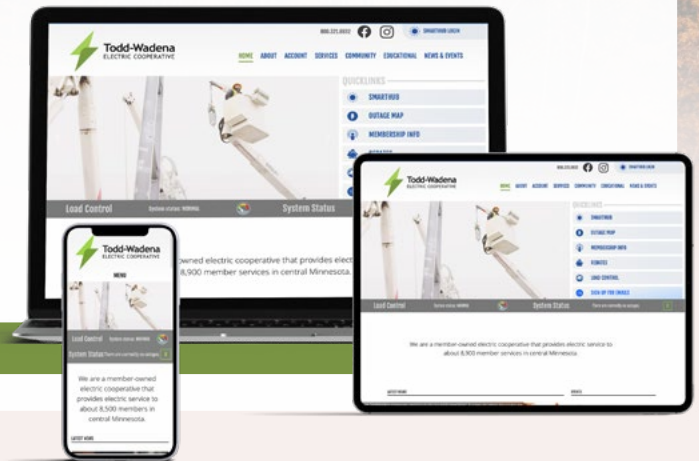


## New Website for Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative Launches

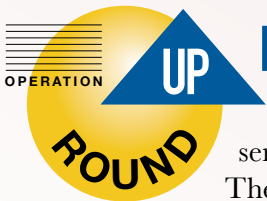
Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is proud to announce the launch of our newly revamped website! As a consumer-focused and member-owned cooperative, it's important for us to make our services and programs easily accessible. With user experience and access in mind, the website has a new design featuring a clean, fresh look, with responsive views for both mobile and desktop users. We've also improved the structure of our content, making it faster and more intuitive to find the information you need.

"We are very excited to announce our new, user-friendly website," says Allison Uselman, TWEC member services manager. "Members can easily find everything

they need regarding load control, rebates, programs, and information about the cooperative. It is such an exciting time of change at the cooperative—with our new headquarters building almost complete, branding refreshed, and now our new website!"



Check out the new website at [www.toddwadena.coop](http://www.toddwadena.coop)!



## Local Projects Receive Grants

Giving back to the community we serve is a core cooperative principle. The Operation Round Up Program from Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is a great way for the co-op and its members to give back.

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's Community Trust Board recently met and awarded seven Operation Round Up grants to local non-profit organizations, totaling \$12,649.97.

Since the program's inception in 2002, Todd-Wadena members have raised and donated more than \$554,000 for more than 715 local community projects.

Todd-Wadena's Operation Round Up grant applications are reviewed and recipients selected three times a year by a seven-member volunteer Community Trust Board. The next application deadline is January 15<sup>th</sup>.

Organization	Amount
Freshwater Education District	\$2,500. <sup>00</sup>
Staples Area Men's Chorus	\$500. <sup>00</sup>
Skills USA	\$2,500. <sup>00</sup>
Todd County Historical Society	\$699. <sup>97</sup>
Wadena Fire Department	\$5,000. <sup>00</sup>
Sebeka Lions Club	\$950. <sup>00</sup>
Staples Area Women's Chorus	\$500. <sup>00</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,649.<sup>97</sup></b>

Local, nonprofit community groups may apply for Operation Round Up grants by calling the office at (800) 321-8932 or by downloading an application from our website at [www.toddwadena.coop](http://www.toddwadena.coop).

## Season of Gratitude

As we near the year end and the holiday season, it seems appropriate to reflect on a few things I am thankful for. It's been a challenging year for many of us as we continue to face a global pandemic and all of the changes that come along with it. COVID-19 has impacted the way we do business at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, but it hasn't altered our mission: providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity to our members.

One of the biggest changes we experienced in 2020 was the construction of a new headquarters building. With work on the interior of the building almost complete, we physically moved into the new facility in early November. This type of project requires the effort of many, and I am grateful we're nearing completion on a building that will serve our cooperative well for many years to come.

Here are a few additional things I am extra thankful for this year:

- 1) Our members** – the support our members have shown over the past year has been superb. As we've adapted our business to keep employees and members safe during the pandemic, you've supported us each step of the way.
- 2) Our employees** – I am thankful for Todd-Wadena's dedicated employees who put our mission here as the number one priority, every day, regardless of distractions or circumstances that may make it difficult at times. Remote work for a period of time; mandatory face mask use; disruption of normal crew routines; and other changes in our work practices have been accepted and the job has continued to get done.
- 3) Great River Energy** – we are fortunate to have such insightful leadership at our wholesale power provider. Despite the controversial decision GRE made to close Coal Creek Station effective in 2022, their leadership has kept us informed along the way and has laid out a compelling case for keeping our wholesale power reliable and affordable into the future.

This list could go on for several pages. Suffice it to say that our small electric co-op is blessed in many ways. I am thankful for all of it!



**Daniel Carlisle**  
President/CEO

## Board Minutes

### Highlights from the September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020, regular board meeting:

- Kristi Robinson, PE, STAR Energy, LLC presented the 2021-2024 Construction Work Plan. She reviewed the distribution plant investments, the site-specific projects, and the projected capital spending required.
- CEO Dan Carlisle provided a recap from some recent meetings with Great River Energy (GRE). The member managers group continues to focus on the new GRE power purchasing agreements that are being developed.
- The Building Committee gave a few quick updates on the status of the new headquarters building as the project remains on schedule.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the August financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 5.5 percent over budget. Energy revenue was 3.2 percent over budget. August's purchased power expense was 1.6 percent over budget. Tier is 2.09 and Equity is 43.88.
- The 2021 wage and benefit options were reviewed.
- Member Services Manager Allison Uselman discussed the results from the GRE Irrigation Pilot program from May. She also conducted a thorough cost analysis on all of TWEC's Load Management programs. She was able to show how many years it took for each project to reach its return on investment.
- Board members approved a new logo for Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative.
- Operations Manager Todd Miller touched on a few items from a recent Safety Committee meeting. They reviewed and updated CIP goals, as well as updating the Core Safety Rules.
- Board Member Mike Thorson shared a summary of GRE's strategic planning session that took place earlier in the month. The four strategic items are: growth; continue to be competitive; position itself with its portfolio; and shape the future.
- Board Chair Miles Kuschel thanked everyone involved for making the second half of TWEC's bifurcated annual meeting a success.
- Board Member Dale Adams began the STAR Energy report with a quick summary of the strategic planning session that was held. They reviewed STAR's history and the goals and service area outreach.

Look for your **capital credit checks**! Checks will get mailed in December and should arrive in eligible members' mailboxes by the 25<sup>th</sup> of that month.

## How Capital Credits Work

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit cooperative with members who share in the ownership, construction, maintenance and prosperity of the co-op.

STEP 1

### ALLOCATION

An allocation is made annually for each member based on the amount of electricity purchased. The allocation is the member's share of the net margins. The co-op sets this money aside to be used as operating capital for improvements and maintenance over a period of years.



When a person establishes service with us, they become a member and are eligible for capital credits.



Capital credits represent a member's share of the cooperative's margins during the time they have membership.



At the end of each year, any funds remaining after expenses (margins) are allocated to the member's account based on percentage of electricity purchased.

The allocated funds are used as operating capital for system improvements and maintenance until the board of directors retires capital credits.



STEP 2

### RETIREMENT

A retirement is the amount a member receives back as a refund. It is a portion of the total allocation. When capital is no longer needed for operating expenses, it is retired. The amount paid is decided annually by the board of directors based on the financial conditions of the cooperative, and is subject to Rural Utility Services (RUS) and other lending institutions.



When the board elects to retire capital credits, we calculate the amount to pay each member based on historical allocation.



Annually, the board of directors evaluates the financial condition of the cooperative to determine whether to retire capital credits.



Checks are mailed to members when there is more than \$10 due. Retirements less than \$10 are not issued a check and the allocation remains in the member's capital credit account until their refund exceeds \$10.

Our offices will be closed on November 11<sup>th</sup> in observance of **Veterans Day** and November 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> for **Thanksgiving**. Thank you.



Would you like to receive notifications when TWEC will control your heating system this winter?

**Sign up via SmartHub to receive a text or email.**



## **NEW!** Receive Dual Fuel Load Control Notifications

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.

### **How to 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 the 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".*

## Tips to Help You Monitor Your Energy Usage with SmartHub

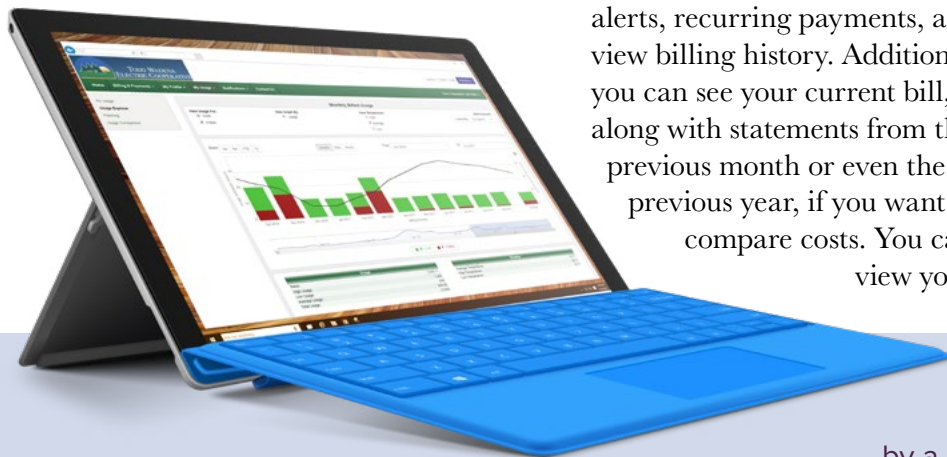
Monitor your usage with SmartHub, TWEC's free tool for account management. SmartHub can help you take control of your account and

gives you the chance to focus on smart energy choices for your household.

You can schedule payments, set up alerts, recurring payments, and view billing history. Additionally, you can see your current bill, along with statements from the previous month or even the previous year, if you want to compare costs. You can view your

actual usage by the hour, day, month, or year and see how your usage is trending over time, which allows you to **take steps to lower your bill.**

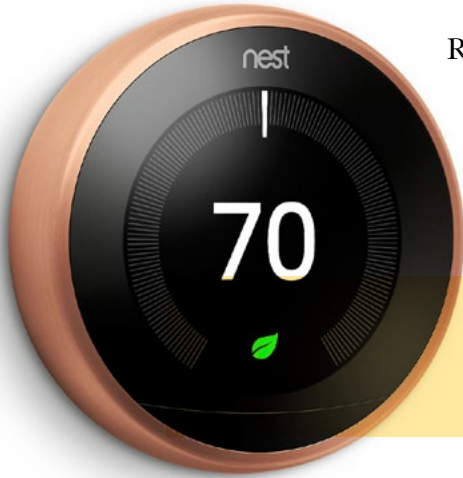
Access SmartHub by going to our website, [www.toddwadena.coop](http://www.toddwadena.coop), or by downloading the app on your mobile device through the *App Store* or *Google Play Marketplace*. SmartHub can be easily accessed on your computer, phone, or tablet.



### **How to Access and Manage 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.

## Take Advantage of Our Thermostat Rebates!



Receive a \$25 rebate for installing a wi-fi thermostat in your house. Visit [www.energywisemnstore.com](http://www.energywisemnstore.com) to purchase your wi-fi thermostat. Members can view all available rebates on our website at [www.toddwadena.coop](http://www.toddwadena.coop).

**ENERGY WISE** 

[www.energywisemnstore.com](http://www.energywisemnstore.com)

Brands that offer wi-fi thermostats:

- ✓ Honeywell
- ✓ Nest (pictured)
- ✓ ecobee
- ✓ LUX
- ✓ Emerson

## Home Weatherization

Now is the time to start weatherizing your home for the heating season because those cold temperatures tend to sneak up on us when we least expect it. Assessing your home for energy-saving measures helps pinpoint where your house is losing energy and what you can do to save money.

### Attic

**Problem:** Attic heat loss

**Solution:** Ensure attic leaks are sealed and increase your attic's insulation. Minnesota's recommended insulation R-value for attics is R-49.

### Air Sealing

**Problem:** Air infiltration and drafts

**Solution:** Eliminate holes and pathways between the inside of your house and the outside. Check for major air leakage issues in places like chimney bypasses, recessed lighting, and HVAC ducts. Use interior-grade caulk on trim and baseboard edges, and spray foam around dryer and heating-and-cooling-system vents. Install foam gaskets on electrical outlets. Weatherstrip where necessary.



### Windows/Doors

**Problem:** Condensation or frost on windows and doors

**Solution:** Consider weather-stripping windows and doors by using polyurethane, mylar, neoprene, or EPDM rubber since they remain flexible under extreme temperatures.

### Furnace

**Problem:** Furnace running overtime

**Solution:** Replace your furnace filter. A clogged furnace filter reduces the airflow through the system, making the furnace work harder and longer to deliver heat throughout the house. Schedule annual tune-ups to keep the system running properly.

### Electric Water Heater

**Problem:** Not enough hot water

**Solution:** Check the thermostat – usually hidden behind an access panel on the side of the tank and under a layer of insulation. Check for a faulty thermostat, element, or loose wiring. Refer to your owner's manual for assistance.

## Make your holiday twice as bright.



### Buy one string of energy-saving LED holiday lights, get one FREE!

The holiday season is one of the most energy-intensive times of the year, but that doesn't mean you should keep your twinkling, strobing, and glittering decorations packed away. Instead, use up to **90% less electricity** by switching from incandescent to durable, longer lasting LED holiday string lights. And now, we're making it easy to make the switch with a *buy one, get one free offer*—available to the first 200 members. Offer begins November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

Take advantage of this **BOGO offer while supplies last!**

Give the gift of energy savings at [www.energywisemnstore.com](http://www.energywisemnstore.com).

ENERGY WISE 

### Sales Tax Exemption for Residential Electric Heat

A tax exemption is available for the months of November through April if you heat your home primarily with electricity. To determine eligibility, see the Minnesota Department of Revenue Sales Tax Fact Sheet 157 at [www.revenue.state.mn.us](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us).

If you have questions regarding your eligibility for sales tax exemptions, please contact the *Minnesota Department of Revenue* at (651) 296-6181 or toll free at (800) 657-3777, or by email at [salesuse.tax@state.mn.us](mailto:salesuse.tax@state.mn.us).

**To apply for a sales tax exemption for residential electric heat, please visit [www.toddwadana.coop](http://www.toddwadana.coop).**

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Keep cold air out to save energy. Seal air leaks around pipes and any gaps around chimneys and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



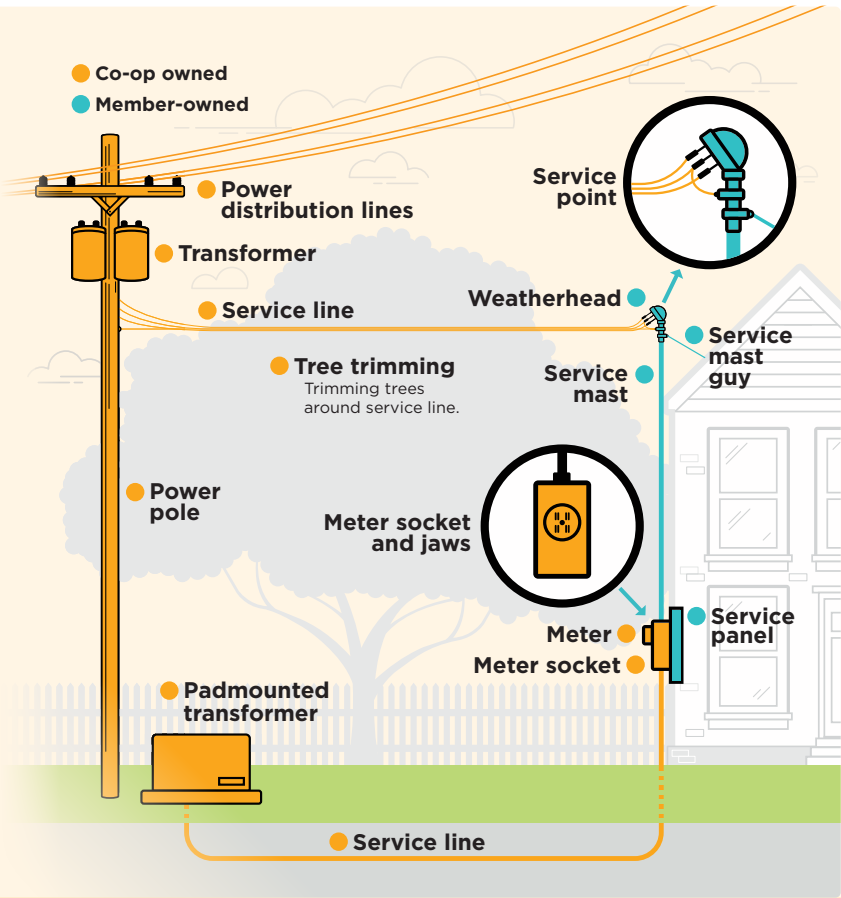
Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

# 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.*



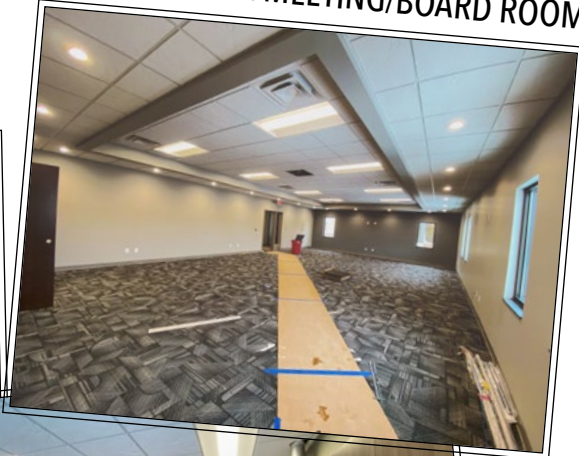
*Correction: In the October issue of Pine to Prairie, the underground service line and tree trimming were marked as "member-owned." They should have been marked as "co-op owned." The corrected infographic is displayed above.*

# Headquarters Building Project in Final Stages

FRONT LOBBY



EMPLOYEE MEETING/BOARD ROOM



BREAK ROOM



# Pine to Prairie News

*A monthly publication for  
members and friends of*



**Todd-Wadena**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

[www.toddwadena.coop](http://www.toddwadena.coop)

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Monday - Friday

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(800) 321-8932

**Email:** [todd-wad@toddwadena.coop](mailto:todd-wad@toddwadena.coop)

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

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Miles Kuschel, Chair  
Tom Brichacek, Vice Chair  
Marie Katterhagen, Secretary  
Dale Adams, Treasurer  
Michael Thorson, Director  
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](http://www.facebook.com/toddwadenelectriccooperative)  
[www.instagram.com/twec.coop](http://www.instagram.com/twec.coop)

## **Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative**

P.O. Box 431

Wadena, MN 56482

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**PAID**  
DPC

## **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](mailto: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 November 25<sup>th</sup>.

1. Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is proud to announce the launch of our newly revamped \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Capital \_\_\_\_\_ checks will be mailed out to eligible members in December.
3. Receive a \$\_\_\_\_\_ rebate for installing a wi-fi thermostat in your house.

**Name:**

**Your TWEC Service Address:**

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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**Meagan Van Norman of Browerville, Gail Evans of Verndale, Randy Kiphuth of Menahga, Doug Nelson of Sebeka, and Janet Zacharias of Wadena were the winners of our special Co-op Month Reader's Contest in October.**

