





# Pancake

## BREAKFAST & OPEN HOUSE



	<b>Date</b>	<b>September 18<sup>th</sup></b>	
	<b>Time</b>	<b>8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.</b>	
	<b>Location</b>	<b>TWEC Headquarters</b>	

Join us for our *Pancake Breakfast & Open House* on Saturday, September 18<sup>th</sup> from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative headquarters. We hope to see you there!

- ✦ Free breakfast (pancakes & sausage)
- ✦ Tours of our new headquarters
- ✦ Bounce house & kids activities
- ✦ Giveaways and door prizes
- ✦ Battery powered yard tool demos
- ✦ **EV Ride & Drive**

### EV Ride & Drive

We are also hosting an **Electric Vehicle (EV) Ride and Drive**. There will be EVs on display, as well as EV owners who can answer questions. Members will have an opportunity to take an EV out for a test drive!



## Strong Turnout for 4<sup>th</sup> Co-op Strong

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative and West Central Telephone Association held the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Co-op Strong member lunch on Friday, July 16<sup>th</sup> at Memorial Forest Park & Campground in Menahga. The co-ops served over 700 meals during the drive-through lunch event. Members who attended received a BBQ pulled pork sandwich, baked beans, cookie, and a water. They also received a can koozie and a frisbee with their lunch.



*Dan Carlisle serves members*



*Co-op employees prep meals*



*Another successful Co-op Strong!*

*We'd like to say a big **thank you** to all of our members. Also, thank you to Bubba's BBQ Pit for the delicious meal and Menahga Bakery for the cookies.*

### ECO Act Signed into Law

A bill led by electric cooperatives to modernize and expand the state's energy conservation program for utilities was signed into law by Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz last month.

Receiving strong bipartisan support from both the House and Senate, the Energy Conservation and Optimization (ECO) Act updates and expands the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP established energy savings requirements for all Minnesota utilities

— including electric cooperatives — to realize annual energy savings equal to at least 1.5% of annual electricity sales and to spend at least 1.5% of their gross operating revenues on programs to achieve this goal.

Energy savings are typically achieved through member participation in energy savings programs such as energy analysis and incentives for energy-efficiency improvements, like LED lighting and Energy Star appliances. Since CIP was adopted in 2007, the landscape of the utility industry has changed dramatically — primarily the amount of renewable energy resources that have been added to the electric grid. For example, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's wholesale power provider, Great River Energy, is transforming its power supply portfolio in ways that will result in more renewable resources, significantly lower emissions, and reduced power supply costs.

To make CIP more relevant for today, a variety of stakeholders including Minnesota's electric cooperatives and other industry partners, introduced the ECO Act to help incentivize technologies and behaviors that lead to greater efficiency while also reducing emissions economy wide. A main component of the ECO Act emphasizes total energy efficiency across several sectors (e.g., transportation, agriculture) rather than focusing solely on reducing electricity use. This will allow cooperatives the flexibility to achieve their 1.5% reduction goal through programs that promote electrification technologies such as electric vehicles, electric storage water heaters, and air source heat pumps.

Another component of the bill removes the 1.5% spending requirement, unless the reduction in electricity use is not met, which will reduce consumers' total energy bills. These updates will not only benefit the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but they will foster a more resilient grid as well.

The ECO Act benefits consumers, while still supporting our state's conservation goals. Todd-Wadena members have the opportunity to take advantage of several smart electrification options available through the Cooperative. TWEC's special EV rates, Aquanta pilot program, and other rebates (listed in this edition of *Pine to Prairie*), are each uniquely designed to benefit our members and the environment.



**Daniel Carlisle**  
President/CEO &  
General Counsel

### Board Minutes

*Highlights from the June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, regular board meeting:*

- CEO Dan Carlisle provided a recap of the Meals 4 Members initiative that took place last winter through the Cold Weather Rule. A total of \$730 and 583 items were donated by members and employees. All members who were nominated or requested food received items (12 families). The remaining items were donated to the Menahga and Staples food shelves.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the May financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 6 percent over budget. Energy revenue was 4 percent under budget. May's purchased power expense was 21 percent over budget. Tier is 0.84 and Equity is 44.19.
- Directors suggested possible new members for TWEC's Nominating Committee. The Cooperative would like to increase the number of committee members to eleven.
- Member Services Manager Allison Uselman announced that member outage text alerts are now available. Members have the option to go online and sign up for notifications if there is an outage at their location. Uselman also updated the board on the Aclara DRU units, the Aquanta pilot, and TWEC's move toward paperless billing.
- Operations Manager Todd Miller shared how TWEC has now acquired enough overhead and underground wire to complete the outstanding new service orders. There is one 3-phase 4/O ACSR project left to complete.
- TWEC recently received the Minnesota Safety Council Governor's Award of Honor.
- Board Member Mike Thorson gave the Great River Energy (GRE) report. May financials were strong. The GRE Board is reviewing different options to assist cooperatives in covering the costs of the PCA charges.
- Board Chair Miles Kuschel updated the board on several legislative topics — the ECO Act passed, broadband easement legislation is under review by the governor, and the environmental bill is expected to move forward.

**Daniel Carlisle**  
President/CEO & General Counsel

## Aquanta: Smart Water Heater Controller Pilot



Turn your *regular* water heater into a *smart* one! We are still looking for members to participate in the Aquanta Smart Water Heater Controller pilot program. This pilot program allows Todd-Wadena to test Wi-Fi load management, a technology to better help us serve you.

Members on our normal water heater programs typically have their water heaters controlled from a receiver located outside their home. Technology is changing and improving, and there are new ways to handle load management. This pilot tests Wi-Fi control of water heaters.

For those already participating in our water heater programs, there is no change with the amount or timing of water heater control. The credit on your account will remain the same. We are simply evaluating load management options for cost

effectiveness and performance for the future.

Members interested in becoming a part of this pilot will need to have Wi-Fi and a smart phone they can install the Aquanta app on. There is no cost to the member for participating!

### Features of being on our Aquanta Pilot:

- \* Turn your regular water heater into a smart one!
- \* Schedule additional control periods (i.e. when you're on vacation, or out of town)
- \* See your daily usage
- \* Adjust your water temperature
- \* Give your water heater a boost (great for when you have guests and need extra hot water)
- \* Help us test new technology to better serve our members!



*"I love it. I use the app almost every day. It is great because I can look to see what our usage is. We have changed our habits because of this, as far as doing laundry and dishes we now do more on certain days and not others. We are more aware of peak days and try to use less water at those times to be good stewards of the co-op."*

—Tim Larson TWEC Member

**Limited availability!** Contact Allison at (218) 631-3120 or at [mbrservices@toddwadena.coop](mailto:mbrservices@toddwadena.coop) to see if you are eligible.

## Submit Your Photos for Consideration in Our 2022 Calendar

We are continuing to accept photo submissions from members for the Cooperative's 2022 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.\*

*\*Must have an active TWEC account to participate in photo contest.*

1. Submit your digital photos (up to 5 per member) to [mbrservices@toddwadena.coop](mailto:mbrservices@toddwadena.coop) by September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Be sure to send the photographer's name, name on the TWEC account, 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.



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

## Understanding Power Surges and Blinks

Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

### What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade, or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts—this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment. Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers.

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

### What's a power blink?

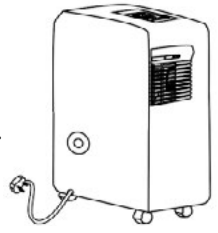
Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds, or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning and other similar events. There were 63 incidents involving trees on TWEC lines in 2020.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321-8932. You may also visit [www.toddwadena.coop/outages](http://www.toddwadena.coop/outages) to view a map of current outages.

## The Cost of Running Your Dehumidifier

Dehumidifiers reduce humidity levels, and can help reduce allergens in your home. Many people plug in the dehumidifier and run it until it needs to be emptied. Keep in mind that running a dehumidifier 24/7 will increase your energy bill.



You can figure out how much it costs to run your dehumidifier by using the equation below.

To calculate our usage we used this formula:

$$\text{Watts}/1,000 \times \text{Hours} = \text{kWh usage}$$

Our dehumidifier used 745 watts.

$$(745 \text{ watts}/1,000) \times 24 \text{ hours a day} \times 11.5 \text{ cents/kWh} = \$2.05$$

$$\$2.05 \times 30 \text{ days} = \$61.50$$

If you run the dehumidifier for 30 days, that would add an additional \$61.50 to your bill. Many people will run the dehumidifier during late spring, summer, and early fall. Dehumidifiers may be a need for some households. Todd-Wadena offers a \$25 rebate for members who purchase an Energy Star rated dehumidifier.



## Off-Peak Water Heating

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

## Off-Peak Space Heating

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

## Appliances

<b>Freezer/Refrigerator (with recycling)</b>	\$75 rebate	<i>Must be Energy Star rated</i>
<b>Clothes Dryer</b>	\$25 rebate	<i>Must be Energy Star rated</i>
<b>Dehumidifier</b>	\$25 rebate	<i>Must be Energy Star rated</i>
<b>Ductless ASHP</b>	\$300 ( <i>if delivered fuel is primary heating source</i> ) \$500 ( <i>if electric is primary heating source</i> )	<i>Must be Energy Star rated</i>
<b>A/C tune up</b>	\$25 rebate	<i>Documentation by contractor</i>
<b>Wi-Fi Thermostat</b>	\$25 rebate	<i>Must be Wi-Fi Smart Thermostat</i>

## Bulbs

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

## Electric Vehicles

<b>Charge Wise</b>	\$500	<i>Rebate is to be used towards installation of electric vehicle charger. Must enroll in an electric vehicle rate.</i>
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## Yard Tools

<b>Battery Powered Lawn Mower</b>	\$50 ( <i>Pre-tax purchase price of \$100–\$400</i> ) \$100 ( <i>Pre-tax purchase price of \$401 and up</i> )	<i>Only one rebate per member on any one (1) yard tool. Rebate is not to exceed 50% of purchase price.</i>
<b>Lawn Care Equipment (battery powered) Edger, Trimmers, Chainsaw, Pole Saw, or Leaf Blower</b>	\$25 ( <i>Pre-tax purchase price \$50–\$200</i> ) \$50 ( <i>Pre-tax purchase price of \$201 and up</i> ) <i>Rebate is not to exceed 50% of purchase price.</i>	

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When shopping for new light bulbs, know the difference between lumens and watts. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb. Watts measure energy consumption. Energy-saving LEDs come in a variety of colors and brightness levels and last 15-25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.



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

## 'Sota Grown Tours & Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Join us on August 27<sup>th</sup> at CLC's Field Day for the official ribbon cutting of our 'Sota Grown indoor food production (IFP) container. The ceremony will take place at 11 a.m. with tours going from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Though the IFP has been in production for over a year, we were unable to host our ribbon cutting and tours due to COVID. We are excited to finally be able to invite our members to see 'Sota Grown in person!

## Financial Assistance Available to Help with Utility Bills

We know that the last year has brought financial hardships for some, placing an even larger burden on families already struggling to pay their bills or bring their accounts current. If you are experiencing difficulty paying your electric bill, the *Energy Assistance Program (EAP)* helps pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs for income-qualified homeowners and renters.

EAP primary heat grants range from \$200 to \$1,600 depending on family size, income, and energy costs. In addition to primary heat grants, crisis-benefit grants are also available. For the second year in a row, the Minnesota Department of Commerce has increased the maximum annual crisis-benefit grants for qualifying households from \$600 to \$1,200.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	3 MONTH MAX GUIDELINES
1	\$7,066
2	\$9,240
3	\$11,415
4	\$13,589
5	\$15,763
6	\$17,937

The EAP application deadline has been extended to **September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021**. To learn more about the EAP program, please contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance.

[mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance](http://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance)

### 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

### DATE

**AUGUST  
27<sup>th</sup>**

### EVENT TIMES

**TOURS: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY: 11 a.m.**

### LOCATION

**Central Lakes College  
Ag & Energy Center  
26505 County Road 2  
Staples, MN 56479**



## CHOOSE YOUR WAY-PREPAY *Take control of your electricity use with prepaid billing!*

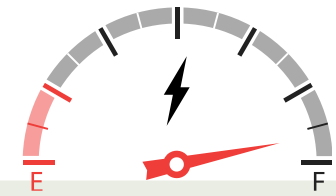
Prepaid billing, or purchasing electricity before you use it, allows you to manage your budget—paying in as much as you want at whatever time works best for you.

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 \$100 is required to set up your prepaid account. After that, pay as much or as little as you like.

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). Members are responsible for monitoring their electric accounts via SmartHub and will not receive a monthly bill.



**CHOOSE YOUR WAY-PREPAY** is a great program for TWEC members who want to take control of their energy use and electric account(s). It's a helpful program for **snowbirds** who don't use much electricity during the winter and don't want to receive a monthly bill!

*Great for Snowbirds!*

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

## Slam the Scam!

**1** Utility phone scams typically involve callers who claim to represent a utility company and attempt to trick people into paying them money by threatening to turn off their service. If you are contacted by phone, hang up immediately and call Todd-Wadena at (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321-8932 to verify your account status. **DO NOT** use the phone number given to you.

**2** Never give out social security numbers, credit card, or banking information to anyone who calls, no matter who they claim to represent. Todd-Wadena does not ask current members for this type of information. Todd-Wadena will never instruct members to purchase a prepaid credit card to pay a past due amount.

**3** If your account is past due, Todd-Wadena will send a *Disconnection Notice* on your bill by U.S. Mail before taking further action. If you believe you were targeted for a scam, report it to police immediately.



### WE WILL

Always try to make payment arrangements for past due accounts. If no contact is made, or if contact is made but no payment agreement is reached, service may be disconnected.

Drive a TWEC vehicle, wear company clothing, and carry Todd-Wadena identification.

Allow you to verify our identity. Ask to see a Todd-Wadena photo ID and have the person wait outside while you call us at (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321-8932 to verify your account status.

### WE WON'T

Demand immediate payment by prepaid credit or debit cards.

Call claiming you have overpaid your utility bill, and ask you to provide personal bank account information or a credit card number to facilitate a refund.

Call asking for social security numbers, credit card, or banking information to avoid disconnection.

Disconnect your service outside of our office hours.

If you're ever unsure of who contacted you, hang up and call Todd-Wadena directly at (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321-8932 or visit our offices during business hours.

# Pine to Prairie News

A monthly publication for  
members and friends of



**Todd-Wadena**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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

**Office Hours:** 7:00am - 3:30pm  
Monday - Friday

**Telephone:** (218) 631-3120 or  
(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 &  
General Counsel

## **LOCAL ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS**

**Todd County:**

Troy Bak (320) 760-1017

**Wadena County:**

Adam Sorensen (320) 304-3927

**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](http://www.facebook.com/toddwadanaelectriccooperative)  
[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

**Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative will be closed  
on Monday, September 6<sup>th</sup> for Labor Day.**

## **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 [mbrservices@toddwadena.coop](mailto:mbrservices@toddwadena.coop) with the subject line "Reader's Contest". Be sure to include your name and TWEC service address. Entries must be received by August 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Mark & Christina Albin of Sebeka was the winner of our July Reader's Contest.**

1. Receiving strong bipartisan support from both the House and Senate, the \_\_\_\_\_ Act updates and expands the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP).
2. We encourages members to install \_\_\_\_\_ protective devices to safeguard your sensitive electronics.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ Grown's ribbon cutting ceremony will take place on Friday, August 27<sup>th</sup> in Staples.

Name:

Your TWEC Account Number:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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