



The Christmas Ice Storm

Cooperation among cooperatives is one of the seven principles and one that Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC) is proud of. When in need, we know we can call upon our sister co-ops for assistance and they can do the same. That's just the cooperative way.

On December 28th, 2023, TWEC Operations Manager Tyler Fisher reached out to Chuck Ames, Design & Construction Supervisor at Cass County Electric Cooperative out of Fargo, ND, to offer our assistance. Over Christmas, North Dakota was hit hard with freezing rain. This created substantial outages with ice coated wires and broken poles for co-ops all over eastern North Dakota. "I saw the news, and since we didn't get hit with the weather they did, I knew they would need help. They were really in need of a **track vehicle**

to help restore outages. Thankfully, we have a bombardier with tracks in our fleet," said Fisher.

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative was lucky to not have received the weather that hit our sister cooperatives to the west. Offering assistance to co-ops in need is the

(Christmas Ice Storm is continued on page 3)



2024 Director Candidates

The 2024 Nominating Committee met on January 17th to select candidates for the 2024 director elections. Two seats on the Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative Board of Directors will expire at the Annual Meeting on April 16th, 2024. The committee nominated incumbents Miles Kuschel and Tom Brichacek, as well as Gary Kneisl. Next month's newsletter, the March *Pine to Prairie*, will have profiles of each candidate (*profiles will also be in the ballot packets all members receive*).

How to Vote

In March, ballot packets with voting instructions will be mailed to members from OSG based out of Bloomington, Illinois. OSG will also receive, scan, and tabulate ballots that members complete and return using the pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelopes provided. OSG will tabulate alternative options that include electronic voting and onsite voting at the Annual Meeting on April 16th.

Save the Date // 2024 Annual Meeting

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's 2024 Annual Meeting will be **Tuesday, April 16th, 2024** at the Maslowski Wellness & Research Center in Wadena, MN.

NEW

THIS YEAR, DINNER WILL TAKE PLACE DURING THE MEETING!



2024 Legislative Expectations

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC) is dedicated to supporting our membership and representing your best interests when it comes to the politics affecting our local communities and industries. This is why we actively participate in, and pay attention to, legislative activities.

The 2024 legislative session starts on February 12th. With a two-year budget enacted last session, no bills need to be passed this year to keep the state government operating. However, there is a projected budget surplus of \$2.4 billion, which will be used by Governor Tim Walz and the legislature to develop a supplemental budget for the 2024 legislative session. Minnesota Management and Budget will release an updated budget forecast in late February, at which time the governor and the legislature will adjust their budget proposals to match the updated amount.

With a smaller surplus than last year and the agencies buried under the work of implementing the extensive new programs and spending passed last session, we expect the focus of this session to be on a large funding package for public infrastructure needs across the state. Both legislative leadership and the governor have emphasized working on a capital investment bill as their main priority this session.

Other contributing factors to consider this session are the beginning of a \$730 million renovation and expansion of the State Office Building which houses all house members and staff. House members need to be out of their offices once session concludes in May for the project to proceed on schedule. It is also an election year which means legislators running for reelection will be especially attuned to campaign politics.

With the carbon free by 2040 bill passed last session, the energy committees will be focused on proposals to better align the permitting process with the demands of the clean energy transition mandated by the legislature. A stakeholder group was convened that resulted in a report offering 35 total recommendations for making the permitting process more efficient.

We also expect the moratorium on building new nuclear facilities in Minnesota to be a discussion item. As utilities work out how to comply with the 2040 carbon free mandate, all clean energy generation sources should be on the table, including nuclear. We take the stand that we need all available tools in our toolbox when working to provide reliable power to Minnesotans.

Our statewide organization, Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), is also working with the Department of Revenue and legislators on a clarification to how electric cooperative property taxes are assessed that will result in savings for members. More broadly, they will be focused on preventing any new mandates from being imposed. While some legislators would like to enact more prescriptive requirements for how utilities decarbonize the electrical grid, TWEC and MREA firmly believe we need to let the experts at utilities decide how we will reach 2040 carbon free compliance.

As we enter the 2024 legislative session, we will continue to communicate about the decisions being made and the impact they will have on our members. Providing you with safe, reliable, and affordable energy remains our priority at Todd-Wadena.



Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO &
General Counsel

Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO & General Counsel

Todd-Wadena Electric
Cooperative's Mission,
Vision, and Values

Mission Statement // To be a trusted partner providing safe, reliable, and affordable energy options to our members.

Vision Statement // To improve the quality of life for our members and embrace beneficial opportunities in a changing industry.

Values // Service • Safety • Fiscal Responsibility • Integrity • Communicate & Educate • Commitment to Community



Todd-Wadena
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

TWEC Board Minutes

Highlights from the December 20th, 2023, regular board meeting:

- CEO Dan Carlisle presented the 2024 Legal Retainer with Pemberton Law Firm. He discussed the new changes to the contract that would allow him (as TWEC's general counsel) to act in certain situations instead of Pemberton. The retainer was approved by the board.
- Carlisle gave the Great River Energy (GRE) report. GRE continues to have a positive year; December has been mild, and January and February are projecting to also have mild weather patterns which is resulting in lower-than-expected gas prices.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the November financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 13 percent under budget. Energy revenue was 3.5 percent over budget. November's purchased power expense was 12.5 percent under budget. Tier is 1.48 and Equity is 40.62.
- The 2024 Budget and 10-Year Forecast was approved by the board.
- Member & Energy Services Manager Allison Frederickson reviewed updates made to the TSM (Technical Specifications Manual) for DER installations.
- Operations Manager Tyler Fisher reported how the department continued to install new services throughout November and started prepping for 2024 workplan projects.
- Graba-Meech presented on Capital Credit Estate Retirements and the Cost of Capital.
- Board Member Dale Adams gave the STAR Energy report. STAR continues to grow business under the engineering and generator programs.
- Board Chair Miles Kuschel shared highlights and take-aways from the Mid-West Electrical Consumers Association's annual meeting he attended in Denver, Colorado.

Christmas Ice Storm (Continued from page 1)

cooperative way. "Looking at the forecast for our area, I felt confident in being able to send a couple of crews," Fisher notes.

Todd-Wadena sent two crews, totaling four lineworkers. That left Todd-Wadena with five lineworkers back home to attend to daily work, outages, and any storms that may arise. Crew Chief Jon Grenier, along with lineworkers Jason "Norm" Ohrmundt, David Snyder, and Brayden Gwiazdon headed to North Dakota to assist Cass County Electric Cooperative (CCEC).



The Todd-Wadena crew spent eight and a half days in North Dakota with time spent in Kindred, Lisbon, Valley City, Arthur, Hope, Page, and the Casselton areas. "The continuous long days are challenging, but also rewarding," said Ohrmundt, one of the TWEC lineworkers sent to North Dakota. The crews would arrive at the CCEC shop at 6 a.m. each morning for a safety meeting, then they would receive their work orders for the day. They planned to be back at the shop around 9 p.m. each night. Safety is a top priority in this line of work, and with more than 100 lineworkers helping out CCEC, they were proud

to report that with approximately 20,000 working hours during this storm restoration, there were zero OSHA reportable accidents, and minimal damage to their equipment.

The Todd-Wadena crew's days consisted of setting new poles after the ice storm had knocked them down. After the line was grounded, the TWEC crew would knock the ice off of the lines (see photo to left), and use the same lines on newly set poles. The guys from TWEC set just under 80 new poles during their stint in North Dakota. Weather conditions and brutal North Dakota winds made their time interesting. The guys worked in muddy fields, sloughs, and snow-covered ditches to set new poles to help the members of Cass County Electric Cooperative.

Even though they were long days, the TWEC crew was happy to help. "The people around there were nice and happy to see us," said Ohrmundt. "They knew when they saw our trucks, it was only a matter of time until their power was restored."



Stats from Cass County Electric Cooperative (from their Facebook page)

CCEC's Christmas Ice Storm of 2023 caused outages for approximately **11.5 days**, and just under **1,200 poles** on the ground. CCEC had around **120 linemen** who put in over **20,000 working hours** with **zero OSHA** reportable accidents to restore power to all essential accounts by **Friday, January 5th**.

Notice Concerning Secondary Meters

Some of our members who are enrolled in our *load management programs* have a *second meter*. This meter is required because of the reduced off-peak rate. It is very common to turn off a heating system or water heater if it is summer, if you go on vacation, or if you are winterizing your cabin. If you choose to turn off your water heater or heating system, ***please do so at the equipment — not at the breaker***. When your equipment is shut off at the breaker, it powers down the secondary meter. This then causes an alert on our end that something may be wrong. At this point, we will send a truck and a technician to investigate. In order to save money for our members, we are asking members to make sure to not turn off any load management equipment at the breaker. Please call our office at (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321-8932 and ask for Mike if you have any questions.



SmartHub Tip

Q: How do I know if there is a load control event happening?

A: If you are enrolled in the dual fuel, air conditioning, irrigation, or a commercial load management program, you can enroll in notifications via *text* and/or *email*.

Log into your SmartHub account, select **Settings** and then **Contact Methods** to add or remove a phone number or email. After your contact information is updated, under the **Settings** menu, click **Manage Notifications**. Next, select **Reports**, and select what alerts are pertinent to your needs.



Why Load Control Times May Increase This Year

So far this winter the temperatures have been very mild for the most part, but the frigid temperatures of winter came for one week and will most likely be back again.

Our heating systems will soon be pushed to the max, but we are doing our best to make sure your budget is not.

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC) understands the expense of keeping our northern Minnesota homes warm in the winter. We, along with our power supplier Great River Energy (GRE), take pride in keeping costs as low as we can through our load management programs. Opting into one of our programs, such as TWEC's dual fuel program, can help you save energy, and money, while considering your heating needs.

Each and every day, GRE looks a day ahead at market conditions and decides if load control will be necessary or beneficial for capacity or pricing needs. This helps keep our costs low and, in turn, our members' rates low. These low prices benefit thousands of our members, not only those with dual fuel but also irrigation, commercial and industrial, and water heating. For many of us, this rate (which is almost half of TWEC's general service rate) can make or break

our winter budget. We know this pricing is very important to you and it is extremely important to us.

Each control, regardless of the program, achieves a significant cost savings. To keep our rates low, we may need to squeeze all the value we can out of our load control programs and our members could see increased load control. This could be consecutive days of control or up to 12-hour dual fuel control events that would be consecutive or split between mornings and evenings.

TWEC's load control programs have parameters in place that limit the hours of control possible each year. While we don't expect that we will reach these limits, it is a reality that increased load control could happen this year. This is why checking your back-up system and updating TWEC if something changes is more important than ever. Please let us know **IMMEDIATELY** if something changes with your non-electric back-up heating system.

We know increased load control can be frustrating, but if we all work together we can keep load management programs valuable and our pricing low.

What are Heating Degree Days? How Do They Affect Me?

What are heating and cooling degree days and how can they be useful to you as a Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative member? *Degree days* are units of measurement used to indicate how warm or cool a location is at any point. The most common use of degree days is for tracking energy use.

The temperature of 65° is used as the baseline for calculating degree days because it is assumed that at 65° a person can be reasonably comfortable without any additional heating or cooling. The daily temperature for a specific location is compared to the baseline, and the difference is the *Heating/Cooling Degree Days*.

To calculate a heating degree day (HDD), subtract the average temperature for the day from 65. For temperatures below 0°, remember that subtracting a *negative* number is the same as *adding* a positive number (so 65° minus -5° = 70 HDD). To calculate a cooling degree day (CDD), simply subtract 65 from the daily average temperature.

Heating and cooling degree days are a local, geographic measurement. They are an effective way to generally assess how much energy (or demand) is required to heat or cool a building in a specific location, as well as understand changes in usage.

How Can Heating and Cooling Degree Days Be Used?

Below is a chart showing January's data for our local region (*Wadena, MN*). The heating degree days (HDD) and the average temperature for each day are shown together for the period of January 1st-31st. Notice how on days when the temperature is low, the heating degree days are higher.

If you notice an increase on your energy bill/usage, check the heating degree day data for your location at www.degreedays.net. A high HDD over the billing period could explain the increase

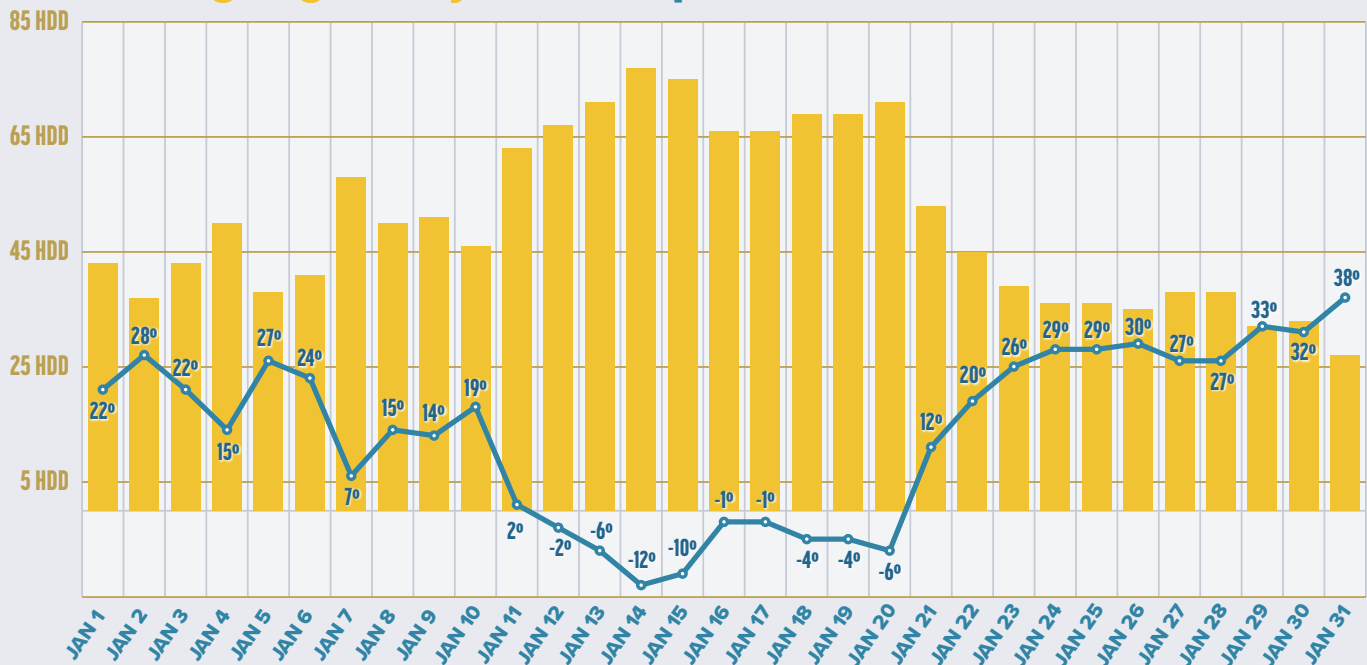
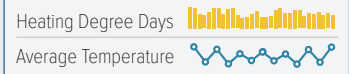
in energy usage. If the HDD has not increased or has even decreased, then other factors should be reviewed. There could be a human factor, mechanical issue, or even a building issue. Finding the root cause of any unexpected increase to your electric bill could save you time and money in the future.

Heating and cooling degree days can also help you see trends in your own household energy usage and assist in energy budgeting.

January 2024

Heating Degree Days with Temperature

LEGEND



Data for Wadena, MN

Don't Let Electrical Safety Get Buried in the Snow (if the snow ever comes)

Keep safety in mind when clearing snow from your driveway and other areas around your home or business. Electric cooperative members need to be mindful of the location of power equipment and make sure it is clear and accessible for Todd-Wadena crews. Please take note of the locations of pad-mounted transformers, meters, regulators, cabinets, poles, and overhead wires before moving snow.

In addition to paying attention to ground-level equipment, be sure to look up and be aware of overhead power lines – especially

when removing snow from your roof. Also, make plans to pile snow away from power lines where children might play.

In the event of an outage, clearing snow around utility equipment will make it easier for lineworkers to get power restored. TWEC recommends using a shovel to prevent damage. This allows members to be aware of the utility infrastructure below. If you notice damaged equipment, please contact TWEC at (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321-8932 so it can be inspected.



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

Years of Service Award

Left to Right: David Snyder (*Journeyman Lineworker, 10 years*), Tyler Fisher (*Operations Manager, 10 years*), Allison Frederickson (*Member & Energy Services Manager, 5 years*), Jason Ohrmundt (*Journeyman Lineworker, 15 years*), Melissa Evans (*Member Services Rep, 5 years*), Dan Carlisle (*President/CEO & General Counsel, 5 years*), Abby Harrison (*Executive Assistance/Cyber Security Specialist, 5 years*), Scott Kangas (*Warehouse Specialist, 15 years*), Josh Byman (*Journeyman Lineworker, 15 years*).

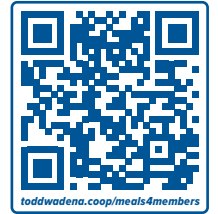


MEALS 4 MEMBERS



Our desire is to serve Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC) members in need, and one way we do that is through our *Meals 4 Members* program. We are currently collecting food items via your food donations. These donations are gathered and then distributed directly to members who can use assistance. Please donate **unexpired/non-perishable food items** now through April. Monetary donations are also welcome.

If you are in need, please fill out a one-time *Meals 4 Members* home delivery request form by visiting toddwadena.coop/meals4members, scanning the QR code to the right, or by calling Kallie at (218) 632-3216. Deliveries for *Meals 4 Members* home delivery baskets will be on a weekly basis starting in January and going through April.



Your donations help us provide assistance to members in need. We couldn't do this without the generous help of our members. Please consider donating if you are able. *Thank you!*

Medical Alert List

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative keeps a medical alert list to note households with an occupant dependent on life-support equipment. Qualifying equipment can include respirators, oxygen concentrators, ventilators, home dialysis, and other equipment for human life threatening medical conditions.

If you are on TWEC's *Medical Alert List*, we attempt to notify you prior to a planned outage—allowing you to make alternative arrangements. In the event of an unplanned outage, the cooperative's restoration process requires the backbone of the system to be restored first, then members on the medical alert list will be taken into consideration.

If you have critical health issues or have medically necessary equipment requiring electricity, a certification form needs to be filled out by your medical provider and given to TWEC.

Note: members with critical health issues should always be prepared with back-up plans in case of an outage. Please make sure you have adequate back-up plans.



Pine to Prairie News

A monthly publication for members & friends of



Todd-Wadena
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Monday - Friday

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Wadena County:

Brandon Disselbrett (218) 640-0187

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

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www.instagram.com/twec.coop

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 431

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February Reader's Contest

1. In _____ ballot packets with voting instructions will be mailed to all members.
2. Members can enroll in _____ control notifications via text and/or email in SmartHub.
3. On Days when the temperature is low, the _____ degree days are higher.

Name:

Your TWEC Account Number:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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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 with the subject line "Reader's Contest". Be sure to include your name and TWEC service address. Entries must be received by February 25th.

Robert Mudék of Staples was the winner of our January Reader's Contest.

