



2024 Annual Meeting

Please join us for the 2024 Annual Meeting on **Tuesday, April 16th, 2024** at the Maslowski Wellness & Research Center (17 5th St. SW, Wadena, MN).

3:30 p.m. Registration

4:00 p.m. Deep Dive Session: Rooted in Agriculture
Free Swim

4:30 p.m. Bingo

5:30 p.m. Business meeting with meal

Official Notice of Annual Meeting

Please take notice that a regular meeting of the members of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative will be held at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 16th, 2024. The meeting will be held at the *Maslowski Wellness and Research Center* at 17 5th Street SW in the City of Wadena, Minnesota, at which time and place the following matters will come before the meeting for consideration:

1. Presentation and consideration of reports of officers and managers.
2. Election of two directors to serve terms of three years. Ballots will be mailed to all members; alternative options will include electronic voting and on-site voting at the Annual Meeting on April 16th, 2024. Mailed and electronic ballots will be counted as a vote if properly received by 8:00 a.m. CST on April 16th, 2024. The Nominating Committee selected the following nominees whose names will appear on the ballot for terms expiring in 2027: *Tom Brichacek, Miles Kuschel, and Gary Kneisl.*
3. Any other business to properly come before this meeting.

Marie Katterhagen, Secretary



Effective Governance in Electric Cooperatives

Electric cooperatives, rooted in the principles of member ownership and democratic control, play a crucial role in providing reliable and affordable electricity to millions of rural Americans. At the heart of these cooperatives' operations lies governance—the framework through which decisions are made, policies are set, and accountability is ensured. Effective governance is essential for electric cooperatives to thrive, fulfilling their mission of serving their members and communities.

Governance in electric cooperatives encompasses a range of activities and structures aimed at promoting transparency, accountability, and member participation. It is the mechanism through which the cooperative's values and priorities are upheld, and decisions are made in the best interest of the membership.

Key aspects of effective governance include:

- 1) Democratic Member Control:** Electric cooperatives operate under the principle of “one member, one vote,” ensuring that each member has an equal say in the cooperative's affairs, regardless of the member's electricity consumption or financial contribution. This democratic structure empowers members to elect representatives to the board of directors and participate in important decisions affecting the cooperative.
- 2) Board of Directors:** The board of directors serve as the governing body of the electric cooperative. It is responsible for setting strategic direction and representing the interests of the membership. Directors are elected by the members and are entrusted with upholding the cooperative's mission, values, and fiduciary duties.
- 3) Transparency and Accountability:** Electric cooperatives are expected to operate with transparency, providing members with access to information about governance, finances, and operations. Regular communication and financial reporting help build trust and confidence among members, ensuring accountability to the communities served.
- 4) Member Engagement:** Engaging members in the governance process is essential for ensuring that the cooperative remains responsive to their needs and priorities. Opportunities for member participation, such as annual meetings, member forums, and surveys, enable cooperative leadership to gather feedback and insights that inform decision-making.

Effective governance is one of the cornerstones of electric cooperatives' success. It is evident in every aspect of what we do, especially Todd-Wadena's election and annual meeting. As an owner of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, please take the opportunity to participate in the democratic process by voting for your board of directors and attending the annual meeting on April 16th. As the energy landscape continues to evolve, robust governance practices will remain essential for guiding TWEC toward our future of providing reliable and affordable electricity to our members.



Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO &
General Counsel

TWEC Board Minutes

Highlights from the January 25th, 2024, regular board meeting:

- *Member & Energy Services Manager Allison Frederickson shared a few department highlights from 2023: the member survey surpassing the strategic goal and stretch goal, by reaching a 97% satisfaction rating for the different services members received throughout the year; the Community Ambassador Program providing 62.5 hours of community service in TWEC's territory; and the rebate program providing over 680,000 kWh savings in beneficial electrification.*
- *CEO Dan Carlisle attended the recent CEO Close Up and shared highlights from the conference. The seminars focused on communication and leadership skill awareness and building; workforce challenges; and Artificial Intelligence in the electric industry.*
- *Board Member Mike Thorson gave the GRE report, noting how 2023 ended financially strong. Assets in 2023 performed extremely well and greatly benefited from the wind contracts.*
- *Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the December and 2023 Year-End financials to the board. December kWh sales were 12 percent under budget, year-end 1.6 percent under budget. Monthly energy revenue was 2 percent over budget, year-end 3 percent over budget. December's purchased power expense was 15 percent under budget, year-end 4.5 percent under budget. Tier is 2.38 and Equity is 40.33.*
- *Management compiled and included in the board packet the annual year-end reports.*
- *Operations Manager Tyler Fisher recapped December and year-end construction and outage reports. Operations installed 112 new services, 51 service upgrades, and constructed over 62,000 feet of new line.*
- *Board Chair Miles Kuschel discussed the MISO region and how pricing varies across it.*

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

2024 Director Candidate Voting Options

Cooperatives are *democratic entities*, owned by those they serve and governed by elected representatives. In fact, one of the seven cooperative principles is *Democratic Member Control*. In order to underscore this principle, we offer multiple ways to cast your vote. This year you can vote for up to **two candidates**, who will each serve a three-year term ending in 2027.



1 VOTE BY MAIL OR DROP BOX

Election ballots are scheduled to be mailed to all Todd-Wadena members on March 11th. The ballots will look like the sample to the right. The order of candidate names will be rotated among ballots.

To vote by mail, complete your ballot, place ballot in secret envelope, and seal. Place secret ballot envelope in the yellow, pre-paid return envelope, and mail. The ballots will be mailed directly to our election company, OSG, to tabulate. **Your ballot must be received by April 16th, 2024.**

OR Seal your completed ballot in the appropriate envelopes and place it in the drop box located outside of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's office by **9:00 a.m. on April 8th, 2024.**



NOTICE CONCERNING MAILING ENVELOPES

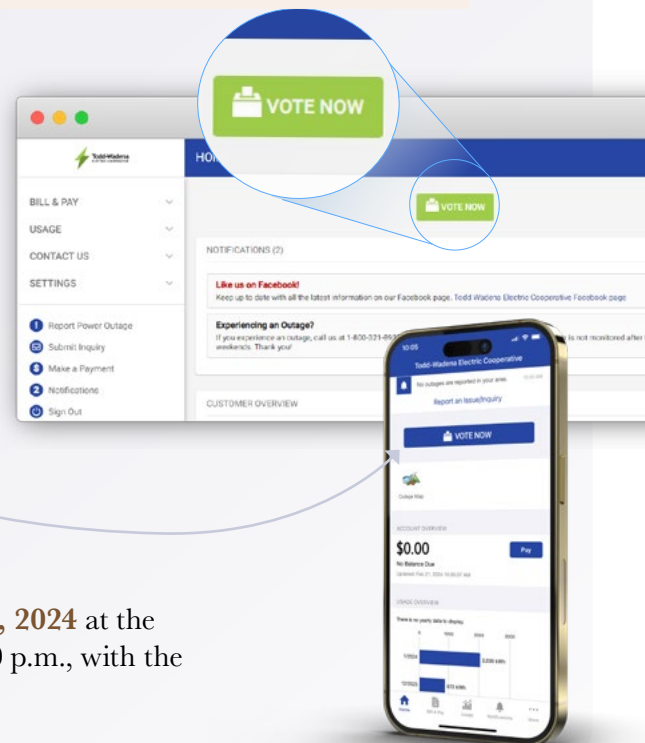
There are two envelopes to be returned with each ballot. One is the **pre-addressed, postage-paid** envelope, and the other is the **secret ballot envelope**. It is very important that the ballot is first placed into the secret ballot envelope, and then that envelope is placed into the pre-addressed envelope to be mailed. **If the ballots are not in a secret ballot envelope they cannot be counted as a valid vote.**

2 VOTE ONLINE

Online voting must be completed by 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 16th, 2024.

Visit our Annual Meeting Page at www.toddwadena.coop and click on the **VOTE NOW** button. Use your member number and election password located on the top of the ballot mailed to you.

OR If you're a registered user on **SmartHub**, access your online ballot by logging into SmartHub at toddwadena.smarthub.coop and click the **VOTE NOW** button, or open the SmartHub app and **vote there.**



3 VOTE IN-PERSON AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Vote in-person at the Annual Meeting on **Tuesday, April 16th, 2024** at the *Maslowski Wellness & Research Center*. Registration opens at 3:30 p.m., with the business meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Results of the balloting will be announced at the close of the Annual Meeting on April 16th and printed in the May issue of *Pine to Prairie News*.

2024 Board Candidates

Tom Brichacek

Tom and his wife, Aimee, live in rural Staples with their two daughters, Abby and Lily.

Tom was born in Moran township and attended school in Staples. He attended Alexandria Technical College, receiving a degree in Marketing and Sales Management. Currently, he is part-owner and Vice President of Miran Creek Furniture, Inc. and oversees all day-to-day operations, including accounting, advertising, customer service, and production. He also serves on the boards of the Staples Area Food Shelf, Staples/Motley FFA Alumni, and the eight-parish Area Catholic Community. There he served as the initial Chair and helped develop the strategic plan for the eight parishes. In the past, he has served on the Sacred Heart Area School Board for six years (with two of those years as the Chair) and the Todd County Economic Development Corporation Board.

Tom has been a director on the TWEC Board since 2012, and currently serves as the Vice-Chair. He has completed the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

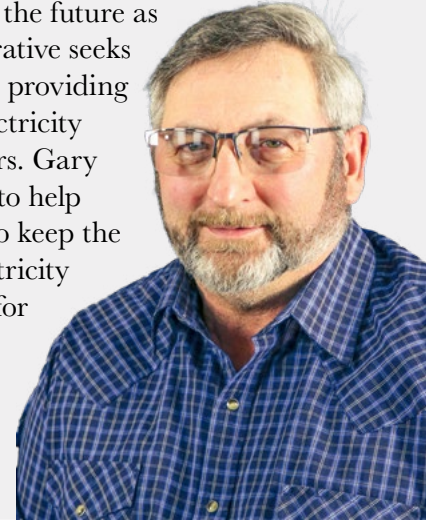
“Working with the entire board, staff, and employees to make decisions that are in the best interest of the members of our cooperative makes serving on the board enjoyable. I work hard to ensure all the decisions we make are well thought out and will serve our membership for years to come. I would appreciate your vote for me to continue to serve,” states Tom.



Gary Kneisl

Gary Kneisl and his wife of 43 years, Kathy, live in rural Verndale. Gary and Kathy have four children and seven grandchildren. After graduating high school, Gary went into partnership with his dad milking cows until 1996 when his father retired. Gary bought him out and continued the dairy farm until 2003 when he sold the cows and raised beef feeders. Gary has center pivot irrigation systems. His oldest son is taking over the farm, and Gary has since semi-retired, helping out as the hired hand when needed. Gary was a Todd County Commissioner for 16 years, ending in 2022, and is active in the Hewitt Lions Club.

Gary believes the big changes and challenges for Todd-Wadena, and all electric cooperatives, will be mandates for solar, wind, and electric vehicles. These mandates could pose a challenge to Todd-Wadena in the future as the Cooperative seeks to continue providing reliable electricity for members. Gary would like to help find ways to keep the cost of electricity affordable for members in spite of these mandates.



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

Miles Kuschel

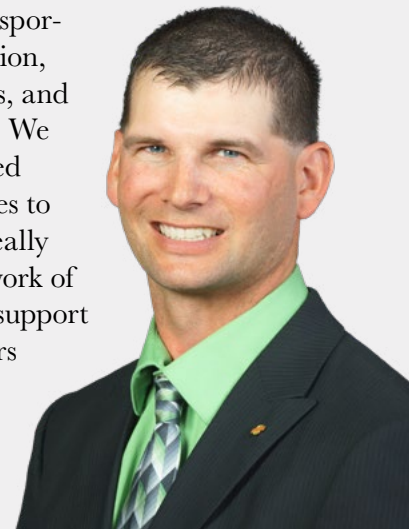
Miles, his wife Sarah, and their three children live east of Nimrod, where he is a third-generation cattle rancher. They use rotational grazing to provide forage for the cattle and produce much of their own hay.

Miles attended school in Sebeka and then earned a degree in Beef Production from the UW-Madison Farm & Industry Short Course. He has served various roles within the Cass Co. Farm Bureau, American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers, Ansel Township Board, and recently served on the FCC Broadband Task Force, Data and Mapping Group. He also serves as a District Director for the MN Farm Bureau State Board. Miles volunteers for 4-H, FFA, and Second Harvest Heartland, among others.

Miles has spent much of his term on the TWEC Board advocating for a reliable and affordable electric supply and continues to promote Beneficial Electrification. “Anytime we can save members money and make their lives easier, we need to put our efforts into making it succeed,” Miles states. He continues to work with both state and federal legislators to ensure they understand how the rules and regulations affect our members of today and tomorrow. Miles says, “I’m genuinely concerned at

the government’s current pace of mandates and regulations. We must continue to tell the agencies how they impact our small towns, family farms, and families.” Miles’ focus for the upcoming term will be on managing inflation, increasing broadband access, meeting members’ expectations, and promoting youth involvement.

Miles is humbled to have the opportunity to serve the Cooperative and looks forward to continuing to serve members. “I enjoy receiving questions from members about how the industry is changing and how we are adapting,” he says. “I am excited for the future of the Co-op. We really have an opportunity to help members save money – on transportation, home automation, through off-peak rates, and a host of other things. We want to be your trusted resource when it comes to all things electric. I really appreciate the hard work of TWEC staff and the support of our valued members as we continue to work towards the co-op of tomorrow.”

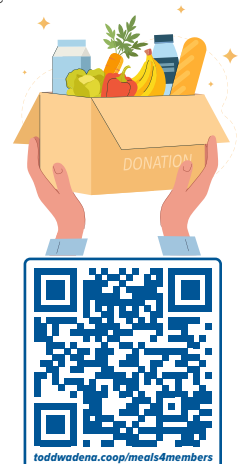


MEALS 4 MEMBERS

Note: 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!*

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. Donations are gathered and then distributed directly to members who can use assistance. Please donate **unexpired/non-perishable food items** now through April.

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 through April.



Area Organizations Receive Grants

Giving back to the community is one of the seven Cooperative Principles. 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 met in early February and awarded six Operation Round Up grants to local non-profit organizations, totaling \$12,183.57.

The recipient organizations and their awards are as follows:

Organization		Amount
Central Minnesota Boxing, Inc.	Competition Padding for Boxing Ring	\$500.00
Friends of Wadena County Youth	Wadena County 4-H Building Remodel	\$3,500.00
Staples All Veterans & Community Park Association	Train Bell Tower	\$1,183.57
Staples '93 Lions	Easter Eggstravaganza	\$500.00
Staples Pickleball Association	Pickleball Courts in Staples	\$3,500.00
Verndale Fire Department	SCBA Rechargeable Batteries	\$3,000.00
Total		\$12,183.57

Funds for the Operation Round Up program come from participating Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative members who allow their monthly electric bills to be rounded up to the nearest dollar, with the change allocated to a Community Trust Fund. The average donation is less than 50 cents a month, yet together, members raise and donate about \$29,000 annually to community service projects in the TWEC service area. Since the program's inception in 2002, Todd-Wadena members have raised and donated more than **\$643,000** for **772** 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 May 15th.** Local, nonprofit community service groups may apply for Operation Round Up grants by downloading a copy of the application form and guidelines at www.toddwadena.coop/oru

February 2024 Operation Round Up Grant Recipients

Back Row (L to R): Roger Houselog, Staples Pickleball Association; Shane Motschenbacher, Central Minnesota Boxing, Inc.; Dan Skogan, Friends of Wadena County Youth; Jeremy Umland, Central Minnesota Boxing, Inc.; Dan Sartell, Friends of Wadena County Youth; Mel Daniels and Milt Peterson, Staples All Veterans & Community Park Association; Kallie Baxter, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative.

Front Row (L to R): Lacey Acuirre, Staples Pickleball Association; Donna Shaw, Cheryl Carey, Beth Gedde, Staples '93 Lions.



Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative office will be closed on March 29th for Good Friday.

Happy Easter!

Annual Cogeneration Notification to Membership

In compliance with Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers who satisfy the conditions as a Qualifying Facility. Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases is subject to resolution by the Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative Board. Interested members should contact *Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 431, Wadena, MN 56482* or call (218) 631-3120.

Use the NOVA Power Portal to find more documentation on interconnection, as well as apply. More information is available at www.toddwadena.coop/cogeneration

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

Vegetation Management: Right-of-Way and Spraying

When you become a member of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, you are agreeing to abide by all co-op policies. TWEC’s tree trimming policy is as follows:

Primary lines (other than those in yards) will be maintained a minimum of 20 feet horizontal clearance on each side of the pole line from the ground up. Overhead primary lines located in members’ yards are maintained 10 feet minimum horizontal right-of-way on each side of the pole line. On three-phase power lines located in members’ yards, the right-of-way must be maintained 15 feet from outside lines and 10 feet below the neutral line. Outside of the right-of-way we also look for “danger trees”—dead or leaning trees that will touch the line if they fall, causing an outage or blinking lights.

	PRIMARY LINE (not in member’s yard)	PRIMARY LINE (in member’s yard)	THREE-PHASE LINE (in member’s yard)
HORIZONTAL FEET OF CLEARANCE (ON EACH SIDE)	20 feet	10 feet	15 feet
VERTICAL CLEARANCE	Ground to line	10 feet	10 feet below the neutral

This policy allows TWEC to responsibly provide safe and reliable energy to our members. The process of implementing this policy is called *Vegetation Management*. Strategies used to minimize vegetation growth that

could cause issues near power lines include tree pruning, brush removal, mowing, and spraying.

TWEC Arborist Joe Sworski is responsible for lining up work for TWEC crews and our vegetation management contractor Carr’s Tree Service. Work consists of side trimming, removals, and mowing. Our goal is to reach all areas of our system once every seven years. This helps us keep the lights on and the blink count minimal.

This spring, TWEC is mowing and spraying all circuits coming out of the *Compton, Leaf River, Sebeka, and Thomastown* substations. TWEC has contracted this service out to **Central Applicators**. Central Applicators will notify members in those areas on the timeline of the spraying via a letter in the mail.

Please read this letter completely and let Central Applicators know if there are any issues. Look for their logo on the letter/envelope (pictured to the right).

We thank you for your cooperation in the ongoing quest for a clear right-of-way.

LOOK FOR THIS LOGO IN THE MAIL



Electric Safety Demonstrations

In January and February, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative visited nearly 350 students at seven different schools/organizations throughout the TWEC service area for the annual electrical safety demonstrations.

Safety is one of TWEC’s values and educating students on how to be safe and smart around electricity is important. This year, TWEC’s Marketing and Communications Specialist *Kallie Baxter* co-presented the safety demonstration with Staking Technician *Luke Wilhelmi*, and lineworkers *Jason “Norm” Ohrmundt*, *Josh Byman*, and *Brady Erickson*.

There are many different scenarios given in the safety demonstrations, our team here at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative wants everyone to be safe around electricity. Would you know what to do if your vehicle crashed into a utility pole? Scan the QR code to the right to watch an informational video.



Pine to Prairie News

A monthly publication for members & friends of



Todd-Wadena
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Monday - Friday

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(800) 321-8932

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Email: todd-wad@toddwadena.coop

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P.O. Box 431
Wadena, MN 56482

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Daniel Carlisle, President/CEO &
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Todd County:

Mark Thoma (320) 309-9483

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

Find us on  

www.facebook.com/toddwadenaelectriccooperative
www.instagram.com/twec.coop

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 431

Wadena, MN 56482

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March 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 with the subject line "Reader's Contest". Be sure to include your name and TWEC service address. Entries must be received by March 25th.

Gary & Elaine Wood of Menahga were the winners of our February Reader's Contest.

1. TWEC visited nearly _____ students this year throughout the service area for the annual electrical safety demonstrations.
2. This spring, TWEC is mowing and spraying all circuits coming out of the Compton, Leaf River, _____, and Thomastown substations.
3. You can vote in the 2024 Director Election via mail, online, or _____ at the Annual Meeting.

Name:

Your TWEC Account Number:

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