

TODD-WADENA
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

February 2020
www.toddwadena.coop

Pine to Prairie News

Our 'Sota Grown Indoor Food Production Container has Arrived!

Last year, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative was selected by our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), to be the host of a hydroponic indoor food production container in our service territory. This national research project is being conducted by the Electrical Power Research Institute (EPRI).

On January 15th, the 'Sota Grown agricultural pod finally arrived to its home at the Ag and Energy Center at Central Lakes College (CLC) in Staples. The keys were passed from GRE to TWEC and then to the host, CLC. We have partnered with the Ag and Energy Center to give students the unique opportunity to learn first-hand about sustainable agricultural practices by maintaining and harvesting the produce.

Lakewood Health System is also another member of the project team and will receive the produce that is grown

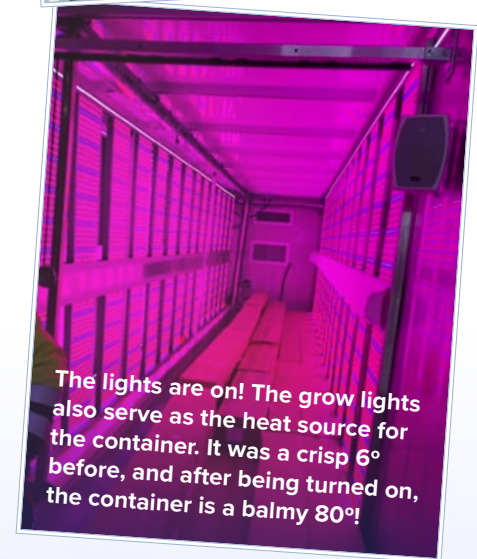
to use in their "Food Farmacy" program. This program works to address hunger/health disparities and is designed to connect families with healthy food options.

This project will gather useful data for the future expansion of Minnesota's indoor agriculture industry. This hydroponic system is built entirely inside a shipping container. It will provide valuable data for utilities—allowing analysis of the electric load required to operate in our region. A wide range of operation parameters will be monitored to determine how Minnesota's outdoor climate impacts energy consumption. GRE and TWEC will use this data for electricity load planning and evaluating beneficial rate designs.

TWEC is excited for this community project and grateful to be working with our local partners, Central Lakes College and Lakewood Health System. This project not only benefits the utility industry but the entire community.



Allison and Greg taking a look at the internal control unit.



The lights are on! The grow lights also serve as the heat source for the container. It was a crisp 6° before, and after being turned on, the container is a balmy 80°!



Find us on 

www.facebook.com/SotaGrown



'Sota Grown is part of a nationwide research project where fully enclosed hydroponic containers utilize technology to supply local, year-round, fresh, sustainable grown food regardless of local climate.

Load Management

We are always looking for ways to help our members save energy and money. Todd Wadena Electric Cooperative uses programs and incentives to promote the use of electricity during off-peak hours—when it costs less. We do this through a process called load management.

Load management refers to a system that matches electricity supply with demand. Think of the electrical grid as a highway with rush hours at certain times (such as hot summer afternoons) when power supplies are stretched to their capacity. These periods of high demand cause spikes in power costs. Load management allows us to adjust participating members' usage patterns to a different time, reducing the strain on an overloaded system.

Our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), determines when a control event will take place. By monitoring conditions over their entire system, as well as the price of electricity on the energy market, they control the load when it is most beneficial to members. GRE is able to purchase off-peak energy at a lower cost, generating savings which TWEC, in turn, can pass on to our members.

TWEC has load management programs for irrigation, dual fuel, water heaters, and commercial/industrial accounts that enroll. Control is managed with *demand response units* installed at members' locations. These units listen for commands and control when needed. Currently we use *radio frequency (RF)* demand response units, which means the commands to control the system are sent via a radio frequency. This method has issues as commands are sometimes not received due to largely forested areas, remote fields, or weather conditions. A newer method for sending commands is now available via *power line carrier (PLC)* demand response units. Here the commands travel through the power line, just like electricity, so the error percentage is significantly decreased.

In 2020, TWEC will be conducting a pilot program installing 100 PLC units, which will utilize this new and improved technology. If everything goes as planned, in 2021, we will roll out a full change out of all receivers – over 5,000 units. With a lower error rate, we can increase savings during times of high demand for electricity. These savings are then passed on to our members.

Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO



Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO

Highlights from the December 20th, 2019, regular board meeting:

- A decision was made to participate in the RC3 Cyber Security Assessment, partnering with Great River Energy (GRE). This will be at zero cost to TWEC.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the financial report for November. The kWh sales in November were 12 percent over budget, with year-to-date sales 3 percent over budget. Monthly revenue was 10.5 percent over budget, with year-to-date revenue 2.4 percent over budget. Tier is 2.37 and Equity is 44.86.
- A deferred revenue option for 2019 was approved as presented.
- The board reviewed the Memberships and Dues for 2020, approving them as presented in the 2020 Budget.
- An update was provided on the potential new headquarters building. Contegity and BHH Partners are working on revising the building layout to take into consideration the changes and suggestions on expansion options.
- Member Services Manager Allison Uselman gave a 2019 In Review Presentation – touching on the multiple projects, events, and changes that occurred in 2019. She also provided an update on the receiver change out project.
- Operations Manager Todd Miller attended the MREA Safety Conference at the beginning of December. The two biggest takeaways from the conference were the OSHA Crane Operator requirements and fatigue in the workplace.
- Miller also gave a 2019 In Review Presentation – covering statistics for the Operations Department, exceeding all areas of its strategic goals for the year. He also touched on a few projects that were completed outside the Work Plan and reviewed the completion of the 2019 vegetation management initiative.
- Board Member Mike Thorson gave the November GRE Report. Great River Energy will end the year in a strong financial position.
- Board Chair Miles Kuschel attended the Midwest Electric Consumers Association (MECA) Annual Meeting. He touched on a multitude of items, including: energy storage; Federal Energy Regulatory Commission rulings; the importance of cyber security assessments; and different states' utility trials and successes.

Headquarters Building

When I was elected to the Board of Directors in 2012, my first meeting there was a presentation on the needs of our headquarters building. In the presentation, there were multiple deficiencies with our current building that were brought up. After that presentation, a building committee was formed to look into possible solutions for the issues.

Throughout 2012 and 2013, we researched, received bids, and evaluated the use of our members' money versus the gains to the building. The committee came to the conclusion that putting that much money remodeling a 1940s building didn't make economic sense.

Moving into 2014, we researched the cost of a new headquarters building and it was concluded that building new versus remodeling made more long-term sense. But the Board felt there were other more pressing items that needed our funds, so we shelved the project at that point.

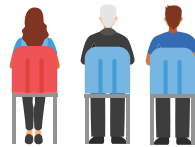
This year, with no substations being built and no major construction projects on the docket the board felt we were in a good position to bring the headquarters project back up again. We reviewed the past documents and plans and came to the same conclusion we did in 2014, that a remodel wasn't the best use of our members' money. We are currently working on updating the plans

that were drawn in 2014 to reflect our current needs, and then we will send those plans out for contractor bids.

Our CFO has been working on the funding sources we will need to complete the project. The Board feels strongly that raising our members' *electric rates cannot and will not* be a component of the funding for the building. We have also increased the depreciation of the existing building, so there will not be any remaining equity when the time comes to remove it. Once we receive the bids back, we will review the bids to determine the cost for a new building. We will then make the final decision to move forward or not. Rest assured, we are working hard to ensure we are doing what is best for our membership.

JOIN US!

NEW BUILDING MEMBER FORUM



Date: Thursday, February 27th

Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Location: TWEC Headquarters

Your Board of Directors is hosting a member forum for those who are interested in the new headquarters project. Come and see the designs of the proposed building and participate in a question and answer time! It will be in the lower level meeting room (please park in the lower level west lot).

Legislation

An important component of being on the Board of Directors at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is keeping up with the bills being proposed in the State and Federal Legislature. Some of the proposed bills would have an impact on the way cooperatives do business, or affect the cost of providing electric service to our members. As directors, we meet with our legislators to lend our point of view to the bills and their impact on our member-owners.

One example of our work on your behalf happened last year. There was an unintended consequence of the 2017 tax reform law that was passed that would have threatened cooperatives' tax exempt status if we accepted grants or federal disaster relief funds. Last September, TWEC CEO Dan Carlisle and I traveled to Washington, D.C. with other electric cooperative directors and CEOs from across the state to meet with

our elected Representatives and Senators to discuss the impact of this law on our local cooperatives. We made real progress with all of the Minnesota legislators (except Representative Omar) signing onto or co-sponsoring the RURAL act to fix this issue. It was signed into law by President Trump in mid-December, saving cooperatives and, in turn, their members, across the nation from suffering the effects of the varied tax implications.

Your elected Board of Directors works with the employees of the Cooperative to ensure safe, reliable and affordable power reaches your homes.

Tom Brichacek
TWEC Board Vice Chair



Appliance & LED Bulb Rebates

Rebates are available for the purchase of new ENERGY STAR rated appliances and LED bulbs. For more information, contact us at (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321-8932, or visit www.toddwadena.coop/forms and scroll down to the “Rebate Forms” section.



Appliances



\$75
REBATE

Refrigerator

(with recycling of old unit)



\$75
REBATE

Freezer

(with recycling of old unit)



\$25
REBATE

Dehumidifier



\$25
REBATE

Clothes Dryer

New appliance must be ENERGY STAR rated.

LED Bulbs



\$2/bulb

REBATE (up to 50% of purchase)

LED Bulbs

(with proof of ENERGY STAR rating)



\$30/fixture

REBATE (min. 50 watt LED)

LED Yard Light Rebate

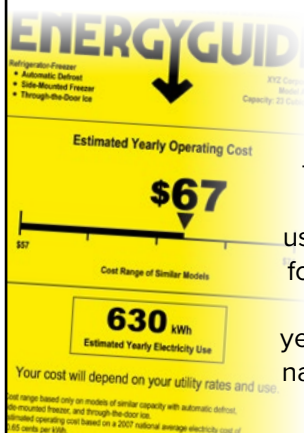
(with proof of ENERGY STAR rating)

Know the Difference Between EnergyGuide and the ENERGY STAR Labels

If you know the difference between the EnergyGuide label and the ENERGY STAR label, you are in better shape than many consumers—even retailers get these confused sometimes. See below to learn about the differences between these two labels. Keep in mind that the rebates we offer are only good for ENERGY STAR rated appliances.

EnergyGuide

The **EnergyGuide** label is a required label which estimates the annual energy consumption for an appliance. It also provides information about whether that use is above or below the average for that type of product. The dollar amount listed is the estimated yearly operating cost based on the national average cost of electricity.



VS

ENERGY STAR

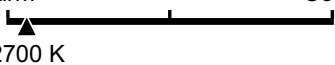
The **ENERGY STAR** label is the government's symbol for energy efficiency. It helps consumers easily recognize highly efficient products, homes, and buildings that save energy and money, and help protect the environment. The ENERGY STAR logo is often incorporated into the EnergyGuide label for certified products.



Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (PDF), found online at www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442, or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Tips on Choosing the Right Bulb

LIGHTING FACTS: Read the Label to Get the Bulb You Need

Lighting Facts Per Bulb	
Brightness	800 lumens
Estimated Yearly Energy Cost	\$1.14
Based on 3 hrs/day, 11¢/kWh Cost depends on rates and use	
Life	22.8 years
Based on 3 hrs/day	
Light Appearance	
Warm  Cool	
2700 K	
Energy Used	9.5 watts

Brightness: It is very important to make sure the lumen rating of a bulb provides the brightness you need. In this example, 800 lumens is the equivalent of a 60-watt incandescent bulb.

Estimated Yearly Energy Cost: LED bulbs have the lowest operating cost and will save you money and energy for years.

Energy Star: This logo means the bulb meets Energy Star's requirements for efficiency, expected life, and quality.

Life: A long life ensures that a high-efficiency LED bulb will pay for itself over time.

Light Appearance: 2700K will provide the warm hue and appearance most people are familiar with. Bulbs that produce a cooler or whiter light will have a higher rating—usually 3500K and over.

LIGHT BULB OUTPUT: How Much Light Do You Need?

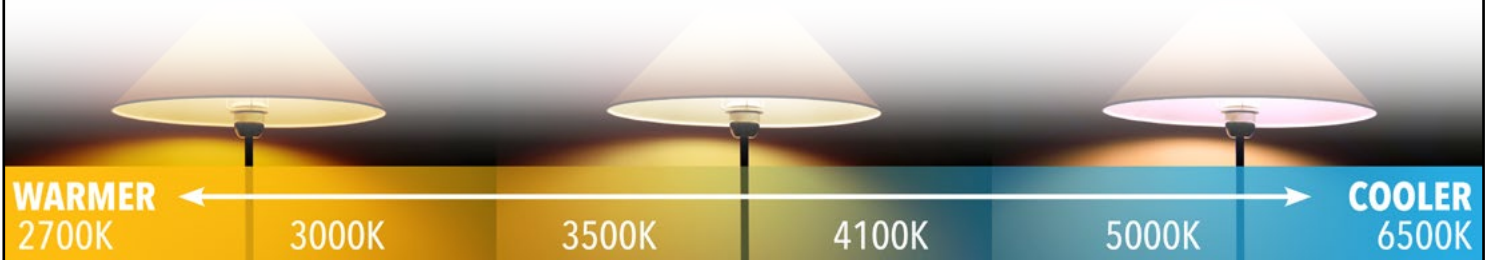
The brightness of traditional incandescent bulbs has always been identified by its wattage. However, the **Watt** is a measure of power consumption, not brightness. The term that provides a true measure of the light output of a bulb is the **Lumen**. The higher the lumen number, the brighter the light. The table to the right will help you compare lumen output of standard wattage incandescent bulbs to halogen, CFL, and LED bulbs.

LUMENS	450	800	1100	1600
Standard Incandescents	40W	60W	75W	100W
New Halogen Incandescents	29W	43W	53W	72W
CFLs	9W	14W	19W	23W
LEDs	4-8W	8-13W	11-15W	16-20W

LIGHT APPEARANCE: What Color of Light Do You Want?

Incandescent lighting is usually described on its packaging as soft-white or warm-white. The **Kelvin (K)** scale rating is a more accurate measure that identifies the light appearance or light color a bulb provides. Incandescent bulbs produce light at 2700K and LED bulbs can produce light of the same warm, inviting color. Be sure to check the **Lighting Facts** label for a **Light Appearance** rating of 2700K if you want to keep

the look of your current incandescent lighting. LED bulbs with higher Kelvin ratings provide a cooler, or more similar to daylight, appearance. Some people prefer a cooler appearance for task lighting or in rooms like kitchens and offices. With most LED bulbs having a **Color Rendering Index (CRI)** above 80, they also can do an excellent job of portraying the true color of objects in a room.



Longevity Award—Ending in 2019



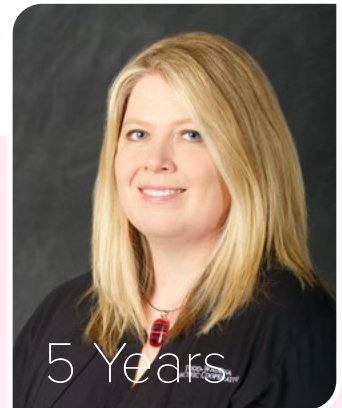
Greg Jacobson
Energy Management
& Meter Tech



Lisa Graba-Meech
Chief Financial Officer



Jon Grenier
Crew Chief



Heidi Smith
Finance-Billing

What You Think Matters

ToddWadena Electric Cooperative has been sending out member satisfaction follow-up surveys to members with recent service orders. These service orders include, but are not limited to: *water heater pick up, tree trimming, electric service transfer, dual fuel meter add*, and other similar services.

In the past these surveys have been sent out by mail, however in order to make a more convenient option for members, as well saving paper and postage, TWEC is now sending emails containing a link to an electronic survey through *Survey Monkey*. **Please take the time to fill these out —your responses are valuable to us!** Paper surveys will continue to be sent out to members who do not have an email address on file.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Are you using your fireplace efficiently?
Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire, and close the damper when a fire is not burning.

Source: energy.gov



February Reader's Contest

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEBRUARY 25TH, 2020.

For your chance to be entered in a drawing to win a **\$10 credit** on your bill, correctly answer the questions and include with your *TWEC bill*.
Mail to TWEC, P.O. Box 431, Wadena, MN 56482. Or email the answers to kvandeventer@toddwadena.coop with the subject line "Reader's Contest". Be sure to include your name and TWEC service address.

Congratulations to Robert Mudek of Staples! He is the January Reader's Contest winner.

1. The _____ Grown indoor food production container is a fully hydroponic system enclosed in a shipping container.
2. You must purchase Energy _____ rated appliances and LEDs in order to be eligible for the rebate.
3. In addition to paper surveys, member satisfaction surveys are also being sent out via _____.

Name:

Your TWEC Service Address:

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Candidates Selected for Director Elections

The 2020 Nominating Committee met on January 23rd to select candidates for the 2020 director elections. Three seats on the Todd-Wadena Board of Directors will expire at the Annual Meeting on April 28th, 2020.

The Committee nominated: **Dale Adams, Gene Kern, and Kristine Spadgenske** (incumbents), as well as **Lee Paskewitz and Steve Riewer**.

Profiles of each of the candidates will be printed in the March issue of *Pine to Prairie*. They will also be enclosed in ballot packets that will be sent to all members. Ballot packets with voting instructions will be mailed to members in March from *Survey and Ballot Systems* based out of Eden Prairie. *Survey and Ballot Systems* will also receive, scan, and tabulate ballots that members complete and return using the pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelopes provided. *Survey & Ballot Systems* will also tabulate alternative options that include **electronic voting** and **on-site voting** at the Annual Meeting on April 28th.

2020 ANNUAL MEETING TUESDAY, APRIL 28th, 2020

All members are invited to bring their entire family to TWEC's 2020 Annual Meeting at the Maslowski Wellness & Research Center on April 28th, 2020. Children are able to enjoy free swimming before and during the business meeting. A meal will follow the business meeting.

Maslowski Wellness & Research Center
17 5th St. Southwest, Wadena, MN



Last Chance to Apply for our 2020 Scholarships!

TWO SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED

Graduating High School Senior Scholarship

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative will award up to **six \$1,000 scholarships** to 2020 graduating high school seniors for their first year (freshman) as a college student. Scholarships are made available with unclaimed capital credits.

Adults Power Up Non-Traditional Scholarship

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative will award up to **two \$1,000 Power Up Non-Traditional Scholarships** to adult students who are headed to college for the first time, returning to complete an interrupted education, or looking to return to college to improve their career opportunities.



Apply now! Applications are available at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's office in Wadena, www.toddwadena.coop, and local high schools.

Please submit your application and attachments to: *Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, Attn: Scholarship Program, P.O. Box 431, Wadena, MN 56482*. They must be postmarked on or by **February 28th, 2020**.

Where Do Funds for the Scholarships Come From?

After a period of seven years, Minnesota law allows cooperatives to use **unclaimed capital credits for charitable or educational purposes**. Each year, Todd-Wadena is able to use the unclaimed capital credits to offer student scholarships in our service area. This year, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is offering up to six \$1,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors, and up to two \$1,000 scholarships to non-traditional, adult students.

Pine to Prairie News

A monthly publication for
members and friends of



TODD-WADENA
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

www.toddwadena.coop

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Monday - Friday

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(800) 321-8932

Email: 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/toddwadenaelectriccooperative
www.instagram.com/twec.coop

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 431

Wadena, MN 56482

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PAID
DPC

REQUEST FOR BIDS

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is requesting bids from local contractors as we consider building a new headquarters. Bid documents will be available to contractors on or about **February 14th** and can be obtained online through Contegrity Group's plan room at www.cgiplanroom.com where electronic download of these documents is free.



- | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ➤ Earthwork | ➤ Sectional Doors | ➤ Plumbing |
| ➤ Demolition | ➤ Aluminum | ➤ HVAC |
| ➤ Exterior | ➤ Entrance & Glazing | ➤ Controls |
| ➤ Improvements | ➤ Gypsum Board | ➤ Testing |
| ➤ Utilities | ➤ Tile | ➤ Adjusting & Balancing |
| ➤ Concrete | ➤ Acoustical | ➤ Electrical |
| ➤ Masonry | ➤ Treatments | ➤ Communications |
| ➤ General | ➤ Flooring | ➤ Safety and Security |
| ➤ Construction | ➤ Painting | |
| ➤ Casework | ➤ Mechanical | |