



*Merry  
Christmas*

### *Holiday Hours*

Our office will be closed on December 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> for Christmas, and January 1<sup>st</sup> for New Year's Day.

## Capital Credit Checks Going Out to Members This Month

Members earn capital credits each year based on their patronage—the more electricity purchased, the higher the allocation of capital credits.

Each year, the Cooperative's Board of Directors makes a decision on whether to retire old capital credits based on the financial health of the cooperative and provision of the by-laws. In the past 10 years, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative has retired \$5,700,000 to members, with \$848,000 of that coming from 2020.

This year, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors approved retiring \$695,000 of capital credits for the remainder of 2005 and a portion of 2006; and from our wholesale energy provider, Great River Energy (GRE), a retirement of \$153,000 of capital credits will be refunded to TWEC members who had patronage from 1985-1987.

A combined capital credit refund check will be mailed out to eligible members in mid-December.



Cover Kay Kreklau

## 2021 Calendar Contest Winners

Todd-Wadena's 2021 calendars will soon be available for our members. The following members' photos were selected for inclusion in the calendar. They each will receive a \$20 credit on their accounts. Thanks for participating!

- January**  
Janice Winter
- February**  
Dennis Page
- March**  
Rita Tepley
- April**  
Jennifer Jacobson

- May**  
Angie Bartels
- June**  
Samantha Krause
- July**  
RoAnn Trout
- August**  
Missy Beyatt

- September**  
Julie Demuth
- October**  
Mary Johnson
- November**  
Angie Hartwig
- December**  
Jane Mattick

### Calendar Pick Up Locations

Due to our lobby being closed to the public, we have coordinated pick up locations throughout our service territory. Stop at any of these locations to pick up your calendar. *Limited quantities are available at each location.*

- Browerville**  
Pro-Ag Farmers' Co-op  
501 Railroad Ave., Browerville
- Long Prairie**  
Long Prairie Chamber of Commerce/  
Great River Regional Library's Foyer  
43 3rd St. N., Long Prairie
- Menahga**  
A Clean Plate Local & Organic Grocery  
13 Birch Ave. SE
- Staples**  
True Value // 205 Warner Road NE
- Wadena**  
Wadena Chamber of Commerce  
100 Aldrich Ave. SW

## Looking Back on 2020

While the past year has necessitated many changes to ensure the health and safety of our members and employees, Todd-Wadena's primary mission has remained the same. Throughout all the unknowns caused by the pandemic, we remain committed to providing our members with safe, reliable, and affordable electricity.

We have been busy at the Cooperative this past year – serving our members, maintaining infrastructure, adapting to changing rules and regulations, and constructing a new headquarters building. Here are a few 2020 accomplishments brought about because of the hard work and dedication of TWEC's Board of Directors and staff:



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

- ✦ We held our first bifurcated Annual Meeting. The first part was a virtual Annual Meeting where we held our annual election, with a later event for business reports held at a drive-in movie theater.
- ✦ The new headquarters building was constructed with staff now operating out of our new facility. TWEC is also now serving its own electric demands.
- ✦ We completed a 4-Year Work Plan that included the replacement of 45.31 miles of line due to growth on the system, the addition of backfeed capability between substations, and the replacement of old lines that had reached the end of their useful life. Also included in the plan was 1.1 miles of new tie lines to address growth, replacement of the Blueberry Substation, an extension of service to 373 new residential consumer locations, and 480 service capacity increases.
- ✦ The cooperative interconnected six solar systems on our lines.
- ✦ The 2021-2024 Work Plan was developed and the Board of Directors approved it.
- ✦ TWEC rolled out HomeServe, dual fuel notifications, an adult scholarship to accompany the student scholarship, electric power tool rebates, a new logo and branding, a new website, an ETS water heating program, and a Choose Your Way-Prepay option for members.
- ✦ The 'Sota Grown indoor food production container arrived and is now producing food.
- ✦ We developed a partnership for secondary locating services with Johnson Locating to serve our membership.
- ✦ Todd-Wadena paid out \$848,000 in capital credits to members. This includes capital credit retirements from 2005 and part of 2006 from TWEC, and credits from 1987 from our wholesale energy provider, Great River Energy.

We are proud of what we accomplished for our membership in 2020 and are excited for the new year ahead of us!

## Board Minutes

**Highlights from the October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, regular board meeting:**

- CEO Dan Carlisle reported on his phone conference with Governor Walz. They discussed the ECO bill, broadband, climate change issues, stray voltage, and disconnect issues.
- Carlisle also shared with the board the bylaw changes Cooperative Network has proposed and has requested a vote on. A motion was approved to elect Mike Thorson, Marie Katterhagen, Gene Kern, Kristine Spadgenske, and Dale Adams as the five delegates representing TWEC's vote on the Cooperative Network bylaw changes.
- The Building Committee gave updates on the status of the new headquarters building. Employees, with the help of directors, will move into the new building the first week in November.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the September financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 5.4 percent over budget. Energy revenue was 0.6 percent over budget. September's purchased power expense was at budget. Tier is 2.25 and Equity is 44.49.
- The 2021-2024 Construction Work Plan was approved as presented.
- The Board of Directors approved the 2021 Wage and Benefits package.
- The 2020 General Capital Credit Retirement was approved as presented (\$695,000 TWEC, \$153,000 GRE).
- Board Member Mike Thorson gave the financial report for Great River Energy (GRE). September was down to budget; however, year-to-date GRE is still showing a positive position.
- Board Chair Miles Kuschel shared about a recent meeting with MREA. Topics discussed included the ECO bill, service territory matters, and member data. Kuschel presented a check to Senator Galzeka on behalf of REPAC.
- The Operation Round Up (ORU) Board met during the past month and awarded grants to several local projects. The ORU Board also held a reorganization meeting and elected new officers.

**Daniel Carlisle**

President/CEO & General Counsel

**NEW!**

## 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 \$50 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!

## Nominating Committee to Meet for 2021 Director Elections

The 2021 Nominating Committee is scheduled to meet on January 21st to make selections for director elections at the April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 TWEC Annual Meeting. Any member interested in becoming a director candidate may contact the cooperative office by either calling TWEC at (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321-8932 or by sending a mailed notice to *Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, Attn: Nominating Committee, P.O. Box 431, Wadena, MN 56482*.

### How to Become a Director

The grassroots participation in nominating and electing directors is one of the most important powers that you, the member-owners of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, have to guide the decisions of your cooperative. This year, the three-year terms of Miles Kuschel and Tom Brichacek will expire at the Annual Meeting on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Election ballots will be mailed to all members in March 2021.

There will again be an option to vote electronically this year. Members may also vote at the TWEC Annual Meeting on Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. If you are interested in becoming a nominee for a director position, please note the list of qualifications to the right.

### To become a nominee for Director you must:

- Be a member in good standing of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative.
- Have primary address on Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's lines.
- Not be employed by, materially affiliated with, or have a material financial interest in any individual or entity which is either directly or substantially competing with the Cooperative, selling goods or services in substantial quantity to the Cooperative, or possess a substantial conflict of interest with the Cooperative.
- Not be an employee or have been an employee of the Cooperative within the last three (3) years.
- Not be a close relative of an employee.
- Have not been convicted of a felony within the last three (3) years.
- Agree to regularly attend all board, regular and special, members' meetings.

## Energy-Efficient Holiday Decorating Tips

With holidays almost upon us and home decorating to do, costs and energy savings should be on the brain. So as you put the finishing touches on that giant lighting display, be sure to read these energy-efficient holiday decorating tips below:

### BUY LED LIGHTS

Those old incandescent holiday lights you have been putting up forever are terribly inefficient, and despite careful storage, often emerge only halfway lit with many being tossed in landfills. Instead, save a bundle by replacing them with ENERGY STAR® qualified LED light strands. In addition to using 70% less energy than traditional bulbs, they're brighter, eco-friendly, and are safer, as they are much cooler than incandescent lights. In addition, they are easier to install—up to 24 strings of LEDs can be connected end-to-end without overloading a wall socket. They last ten times longer, have no filaments or glass to break, and costs are similar to the age-old standard. If you prefer white lights with the look of incandescent lights, look for "warm" white on the label.

### USE LIGHT TIMERS TO SAVE

Set timers for lights to automatically turn on when it gets dark and off in the middle of the night, depending on your preferences. You can save money by keeping light displays on only 8 hours of the evening (when you can see them). If you are still using traditional incandescent bulbs, this tip is even more important to cut down on energy costs.

### REBATES

Savvy shopping will save you money. Buy one get one free on LED holiday lights at [EnergyWiseMNStore.com](http://EnergyWiseMNStore.com). Limited quantities available.

In addition, these lights come in a variety of colors, and have indoor and outdoor models.

### CREATIVE AND REFLECTIVE DECORATING

Not everything is about strands of lights. Reflective ornaments and tinsel are just as bright at night, so getting creative with your lighting display can multiply your resources for shine. You could even mirror your next door neighbors' frighteningly costly display with a string of silver bells on your railing. Don't forget the ribbons, wreaths, garland, and reflective menorahs, for electricity-free age-old traditions that still bring holiday cheer.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Energy bills can increase during winter for a variety of reasons, like houseguests, more time spent at home, and shorter days and longer nights. Small actions, like turning down your thermostat, replacing old bulbs with LEDs and washing clothes in cold water can help you save on your energy costs.



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

## Using Portable Space Heaters Wisely

Electric space heaters can be a convenient heating supplement when used periodically to take the chill off a blustery day. However, they become increasingly ineffective for heating as the space gets larger. They can also be much more expensive to operate long-term as they are not eligible for lower, off-peak kWh pricing.



### Estimating the Cost of Running a Space Heater

We used TWEC's **Kill-A-Watt** meter to figure out how many kWhs our space heater was using. Our heater used 1,500 watts on the high setting. To calculate our usage we used this formula:  $\text{Watts}/1,000 \times \text{Hours} = \text{kWh usage}$ . We wanted to know the cost of usage for one hour on high and our usage came to 1.5 kWh. When multiplied by TWEC's 11.5¢ rate per kilowatt-hour, we found it costs 17.3¢ per hour to run our heater on high.

$$(1,500 \text{ watts}/1,000) \times 24 \text{ hours a day} \times 11.5\text{¢ per kWh} = \mathbf{\$4.14}$$
$$\mathbf{\$4.14} \times 30 \text{ days} = \mathbf{\$124.20}$$

Now we can see what impact a space heater is having on our monthly bill. In this example, a space heater that uses 1,500 watts and operates 24 hours each day at 11.5¢ per kilowatt-hour costs \$4.14 per day to operate. If you run it for 30 days, that would add \$124.20 to your monthly bill!

### USING YOUR SPACE HEATER SAFELY

- Keep the heater at least 3 feet from flammable items such as curtains, furniture, or bedspreads.
- Select a space heater with a guard around the heating element.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- Never leave a space heater unattended.
- Never go to sleep with a space heater on.
- Never use or store flammable liquids near a space heater.
- Always keep heaters a safe distance from water to prevent electrocution.
- Do not use an extension cord with a space heater.
- Do not use the heater to dry clothes.
- Be sure the heater's plug fits snugly in an outlet. The cord and plug may feel warm when operating since the unit draws so much power, but they should not feel hot. If they do, unplug the heater and have a qualified repair person check for problems.
- Do not attempt to repair a broken heater yourself. It should be checked and repaired by a qualified appliance service center.



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

## Dual Fuel Load Control Notifications

Members who participate in our dual fuel load management program can now **receive a notification of control events!** To manage or receive notifications from Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, you will need a SmartHub account.

### MORE DETAILS & HOW TO SETUP

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

Has your organization applied for an Operation Round Up grant? Next deadline is January 15<sup>th</sup>. For more details and to download a fillable application, visit our website.

[www.toddwadena.coop/operation-round-up](http://www.toddwadena.coop/operation-round-up)



**NOTICE:** Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) Off-peak Water Heater control hours have shifted to an hour earlier — water heater load control will now take place from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. over the winter. Overall length of control remains unchanged.

## Co-op Connections Card with the Holiday Elves!

Elf Allison and Elf Kallie want you to shop local and support the businesses that participate in our Co-op Connections card program! Our Co-op Connections card has a **growing number of discounts** offered by local retailers. Request your card today!



### BROWERVILLE

**Konetzko's Meat Market // 516 Main St. S.**  
\$2 off \$20 purchase of meat sticks OR \$2 off 1 lb. purchase of beef jerky. *One discount per visit. Offers cannot be combined. Not valid with any other offers.*

**Pro Ag Farmer's Co-op // 501 Railroad Ave.**  
10% off pet food and bird seed.

### LONG PRAIRIE

**Thorson's Farm Market // Highway 71**  
10% off any purchase.

### MENAHA

**Jan's Hair Attitude // 17 Birch Ave. SE**  
20% off a haircut.

**The Jewel of the Northwoods Bed and Breakfast**  
39050 Twin Lakes Rd. // Stay two nights, get one free.

**Wild Walleye Eatery // 16 Main St. E**  
Free fresh cut fries with purchase of any burger.

### SEBEKA

**Hub 71 Restaurant // 3 U.S. Highway 71 S.**  
Get a FREE drink of choice with any entrée.

**Hub 71 Convenience // 3 U.S. Highway 71 S.**  
Buy one ice cream cone and get the second for ½ off. One offer per visit, per customer.

### STAPLES

**Ace Hardware // 210 2nd Ave. NE**  
10% off any item \$30 or less.

**Japke Decorating, Carpet & Gifts // 877 2nd Ave. NW**  
10% off one item per visit on clothes or gifts.

**LMH Embroidery & Screen Printing // 508 2nd Ave. NE**  
20% off any one regular priced in-stock item (excludes letter jackets).

**True Value // 205 Warner Rd. NE**  
10% off any item \$50 or less.

### WADENA

**1776 Clothing Company // 102 Jefferson St. S.**  
10% off total purchase of regular priced items.

**Everything Under the Sun // 13 Aldrich Ave. SE**  
10% off all regular priced items.

**The Gores Company // 508 S. Jefferson**  
Free market analysis.

**Hometown Crafts // 111 S. Jefferson**  
10% off regular priced merchandise. Not valid with other coupons.

**Lyle's Shoes // 118 Jefferson St.**  
10% off one regular priced in-stock item.

**Over the Rainbow Floral and Gifts // 123 1st St. SW**  
10% off one regular priced gift shop gift item (does not include flowers or wire services). Not valid with any other coupons or specials.

**Wadena Eye Clinic // 222 1st St. SE**  
15% off all regular priced spectacle glasses for work or play, including safety and sportswear.

**Whitetail Run Golf Course // 13379 Leaf River Rd.**  
Get one 18-hole green fee FREE with purchase of one 18-hole green fee and power cart.



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

## 2021 Scholarships



### Graduating High School Senior Scholarship

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative will award up to three \$1,000 scholarships to 2021 graduating high school seniors for their first year (freshman) as a college student. Scholarships are made available with unclaimed capital credits.

### Power Up Non-Traditional Scholarship for Adults

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative will award up to one \$1,000 Power Up Non-Traditional Scholarship to an adult student who is headed to college for the first time, returning to complete an interrupted education, or looking to return to college to improve his or her career opportunities.

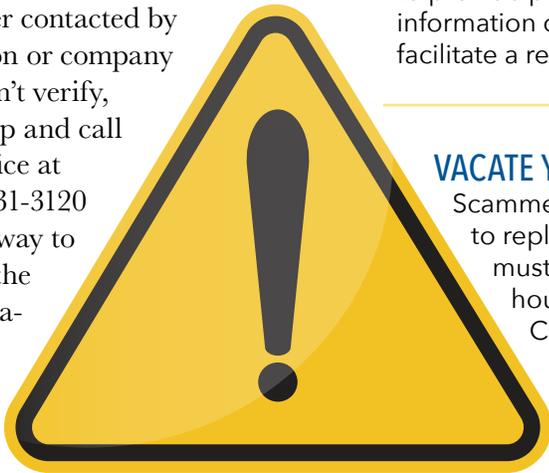
***Applications will be available on TWEC's website during the first week of January 2021.***

### 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 three \$1,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors, and up to one \$1,000 scholarship to a non-traditional, adult student.

## Utility Scam Awareness

Utility scams are common because of the vast number of utilities that exist, plus consumers are understandably anxious with the threat of disruption to their electric, heating, or water service. Protect yourself by being aware of common utility scams. If you are ever contacted by a person or company you can't verify, hang up and call our office at (218) 631-3120 right away to verify the information.



### DISCONNECTION DECEPTION

Scammers call threatening disconnection of your utility service, demanding immediate payment by prepaid cards.

### POWER RESTORATION CHARGE

Scammers call offering to restore power more quickly for a fee in the aftermath of severe storms causing widespread power outages.

### OVERPAYMENT TACTIC

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

### IDENTIFICATION ATTACK

Rather than directing victims to call a 1-800 number, the scammers direct the caller to press 1 to collect more data in an effort to get personally identifiable information.

### VACATE YOUR HOME

Scammers claim there is a need to replace equipment and you must leave your home for 72 hours. Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative will never tell you to leave your house to replace equipment.

### DOOR KNOCKING IMPOSTOR

Door-to-door impostors pose as utility workers to gain entry into unsuspecting victims' homes. Our lineworkers will always have the TWEC logo and only enter your home if you had a previously scheduled appointment.

## READER'S CONTEST

For your chance to be entered in a drawing to win a **\$10 credit** on your bill, correctly answer the questions and include with your TWEC bill. Mail to TWEC, P.O. Box 431, Wadena, MN 56482. Or email the answers to [kvandeventer@toddwadena.coop](mailto:kvandeventer@toddwadena.coop) with the subject line "Reader's Contest". Be sure to include your name and TWEC service address. Entries must be received by December 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Corey Moyer of Verndale was the winner of our November Reader's Contest.**

1. With \_\_\_\_\_ **YOUR WAY—PREPAY**, you purchase electricity before you use it, and your usage and account balance are calculated daily.
2. Set \_\_\_\_\_ for lights to automatically turn on when it gets dark and off in the middle of the night,
3. Scholarship applications will be available online during the first week of \_\_\_\_\_ 2021.

Name:

Your TWEC Service Address:



# Pine to Prairie News

*A monthly publication for  
members and friends of*



**Todd-Wadena**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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

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Monday - Friday

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(800) 321-8932

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**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:**

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

## **Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative**

P.O. Box 431

Wadena, MN 56482

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PRSR STD  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**  
DPC

*Happy  
Holidays*

*From  
Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative*

## **Employees**

Josh Byman	Jason Orlando
Dan Carlisle	Kristen Paurus
Brady Erickson	Lori Redetzke
Melissa Evans	Lisa Reed Krump
Tyler Fisher	Heidi Smith
Lisa Graba-Meech	David Snyder
Jon Grenier	Lori Tumberg
Abby Harrison	Allison Uselman
Greg Jacobson	Kallie Van De Venter
Scott Kangas	Trent Walter
Jamie Line	Luke Wilhelmi
Al Malone	Peggy Wilhelmi
Todd Miller	Mary Williams
Jason Ohrmundt	

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