



'Sota Grown Collaborators Mark a Year of Success

Following a year's delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the collaborators behind 'Sota Grown gathered Friday, Aug. 27th, at the site of their indoor agriculture food project for a celebratory ribbon-cutting event.

'Sota Grown is an innovative pilot project that's growing leafy greens inside a renovated ship-

ping container at Central Lakes College's (CLC) Staples campus. This collaboration between electric cooperatives, a local college, health care facility, and national research institute intends to demonstrate over a two-year period how indoor crop production using efficient electricity, technology, and plant sciences can produce ideal conditions for growth, yield, quantity, and consistency.

Representatives from each of the collaborators — along with special guests including Thom Peterson, Minnesota's Commissioner of Agriculture, and Representative John Poston — spoke on the project's overarching impact on each participating organization, as well as the surrounding community that has benefited by receiving fresh produce grown in the container throughout the last year.

"Thanks to partners and dedicated CLC staff, we have been able to produce well over 1,000 pounds of kale in a year-round capacity," said Cory Detloff, director of Ag & Energy at CLC. "This project gives us a unique ability to measure energy

('Sota Grown is continued on page 6)



ping container at Central Lakes College's (CLC) Staples campus. This collaboration between electric cooperatives, a local college, health care facility, and national research institute intends to demonstrate

Electric Vehicle Ride & Drive



Unplug and get behind the wheel today!

EV Ride & Drive

Date	September 18 th
Time	8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
Location	TWEC Headquarters

We are hosting an **Electric Vehicle (EV) Ride and Drive** at the same time as the *Pancake Breakfast and Open House* event. Members are welcome to come look at *and* test drive a variety of electric vehicles!

Members will have an opportunity to visit with the owners of some of the EVs, who will be available to answer questions on EV ownership.

Test drivers will also receive a free set of car coasters.



Coal Creek Station Sale

Great River Energy (GRE), Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's wholesale power provider, reached an agreement this summer to sell the Coal Creek Station power plant to Rainbow Energy Center, LLC. The new ownership group plans to develop carbon capture and storage at the plant.

The sale of Coal Creek Station averts the plant's closure, which was scheduled for the second half of 2022 unless a buyer was found. Rainbow Energy Center will continue to operate the 1,151-megawatt (MW) power plant using current plant employees they hire. Selling the plant is projected to benefit GRE's member-owners, like Todd-Wadena, compared with shutting it down.

The high voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission system that extends between central North Dakota and Minnesota also has a purchase agreement from Nexus Line, LLC. Great River Energy will operate and maintain the HVDC system under a 10-year contract. The sale of Coal Creek Station and the HVDC system is expected to close later this year, after all required approvals are obtained.

At a special July 30th meeting, GRE's member-cooperatives approved the sale of Coal Creek Station and the HVDC system. Great River Energy's all-requirements members also approved a related purchase power agreement where GRE will purchase 1,050 megawatts of power from Rainbow Energy Center, LLC for approximately two years, followed by 300 megawatts for approximately eight years. Although purchasing power from Rainbow Energy, LLC was not in GRE's original plans, it will serve as a reliable steppingstone as GRE transitions its power supply.

These transactions will help ensure GRE continues to provide its member-owners with reliable and affordable electricity as the cooperative builds its future power supply portfolio. GRE also plans to add 900 MW of wind energy by 2023 and remains on track to meet Minnesota's 80 percent carbon dioxide reduction goal ahead of schedule.

We are pleased that GRE continues to evolve its power supply portfolio to best meet the needs of Todd-Wadena and GRE's other member-owner cooperatives. These power supply changes help us deliver what our members want today and set us up for success for a very long time.



Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO &
General Counsel

Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO
& General Counsel

Coal
Creek
Station

Board Minutes

Highlights from the July 23rd, 2021, regular board meeting:

- CEO Dan Carlisle recently attended the Great River Energy (GRE) Strategic Planning meeting and parts of the MREA District 3 meeting in Alexandria. He also attended the annual three-day Legal Seminar which was held remotely. Carlisle highlighted key topics from the meetings.
- The board approved a one-time donation of \$1,000 to the CFC Integrity Fund.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the June financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 29 percent over budget. Energy revenue was 18 percent over budget. June's purchased power expense was 31 percent over budget. Tier is 0.96 and Equity is 43.72.
- Member & Energy Services Manager Allison Uselman provided an update on the Arc Breaker/Outage test and the interruptible C&I notifications. The 'Sota Grown POD will be having a ribbon cutting, in conjunction with CLC's Field Day on August 27, 2021. Uselman also noted how the Co-op Strong event with WCTA was another success this year, serving approximately 725 members.
- TWEC's Pancake Breakfast is set for September 18, 2021. It will also serve as the Cooperative's official open house for the new headquarters.
- Operations Manager Todd Miller discussed the status of inventory items and extended lead times.
- Board Member Dale Adams gave the STAR Energy report. STAR remains in a strong financial position, with increasing equity. Dan Carlisle has been reelected as board chair.
- Board Member Mike Thorson gave the GRE report. June was a positive month for GRE. The GRE Board reviewed and approved a revised budget that includes the sale of Coal Creek Station.
- Carlisle read the Sale of Coal Creek Station Resolution stating that the TWEC Board is in favor of the sale of Coal Creek Station as presented by GRE and nominates Mike Thorson as its voting delegate for the July 30, 2021 special meeting. The board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.
- Board Chair Miles Kuschel updated the board on several legislative topics. The Energy/Commerce bill was passed, providing Solar-for-Schools funding of \$18.4 million. The Broadband Easement also passed and the Cold Weather Rule has been extended with updated guidelines.

Conservation

By Board Director Kristine Spadgenske

“Who left the lights on?” was a common question my parents asked while growing up and it is a common question I ask my own kids. It is hard for us to imagine a time when rooms were lit by candles and oil lamps, houses were heated with fireplaces, and meals were cooked on wood stoves. Today, it is so easy to take electricity for granted.

My husband, Mark, and I dairy farm in a partnership with Mike (Mark’s twin brother) where we milk 350 cows. On our dairy farm, conservation is the heart of everything we do. We are committed to both the care of our animals and the environment. We recycle used water at least three times. We drink the same water that our cows do, so water safety is very important.

We conserve the land by maintaining soil health. We take soil samples to monitor the nutrients in the ground and add nutrients that have been lost. We also have a nutrient management plan where we monitor the amount of nutrients in the manure we spread back on the ground and only spread on land that needs it.

We believe in clean air for everyone to breathe. Collectively, the dairy industry has a goal of becoming net-zero or net positive by 2050. Because of on-farm practices in place for many years, we have already been lowering our carbon footprint and are well on our way to reaching this goal.

In 2014, with help from *Minnesota Milk Producers* and the *Minnesota Department of Agriculture*, an energy audit was performed on our dairy farm. Thanks to grants from Minnesota’s *Clean Energy Resource Team Program* and *Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative* we were able to replace various motors and fans, as well as our vacuum pump with variable speed models. We increased the capacity of our plate cooler, where we cool the milk by using well water, and installed LED lighting in the cow barn, calf barn, and farmyard. We also utilize off-peak rates by using Marathon water heaters and while heating our homes.

Conserving energy by reducing electrical and energy costs is not just the “right” thing to do, it also helps our bottom line in an industry where the margin of profit is very small.

Last Chance to Submit Photos for 2022 Calendar

This is your last reminder that we are accepting photos for consideration in the Cooperative’s 2022 calendar. We will receive submissions through the 25th of September. Please keep in mind that we are looking for scenic photos (wildlife or landscape) that represent the four seasons of Minnesota.

From the entries received, we’ll select 13 photos — one for each month of the year plus one for the cover. Members whose photos are included in the calendar will receive a \$20 credit on their active TWEC account.

1. Submit your digital photos (up to 5 per member) to mbrservices@toddwadena.coop by September 25th, 2021. Be sure to send the photographer’s name, name on the TWEC account, TWEC service address, and phone number with the photo.
2. Photos must depict a Minnesota scene (wildlife or landscape) with a horizontal view. Representations of all four seasons are needed. Color photos are preferred. Extra consideration will be given to photos within the TWEC service area.
3. IMPORTANT: Photos must be high quality (300 dpi or higher) for an 8 x 10 inch landscape production.
4. Winning photos may be used in future cooperative publications.



Kristine Spadgenske, with her husband, Mark, at their farm.





Prepare Your Home for Cold Weather

Fall and winter are just around the corner, which makes now the perfect time to prepare your home for the inevitable colder weather. There are some simple steps you can take now that might prevent surprise repairs during an inconvenient time of the year, and even save you some money on heating costs.

Check Heating Fuels

Don't wait for the first snow fall to realize you're out of propane, oil, dry firewood, etc. Check your levels now to be sure you're well prepared, and take advantage of pre-season discounts! If you use wood, make sure it is dry, seasoned firewood – using "green" wood increases your risk of a chimney fire.

Don't Forget About the Attic, Windows, and Doors

Sealing cracks and making sure your attic is properly insulated will not only help save you money in heating costs, it could help reduce your risk of an ice dam. Ice dams form when water located around the eaves of your roof is allowed

to freeze. This forms icicles and literal dams of ice, preventing further snow melt and water from rolling off the roof. That collecting water runs into your walls and ceilings, causing severe damage inside your home. Proper insulation will help keep the eaves clear of icicles and ice dams.

Check Smoke and CO Detectors

With the winter heating season nearing, make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working and have fresh batteries. You'll want them to work properly in the event of a life-threatening problem with your heating and/or ventilation system.

Take Advantage of Our Wi-fi Thermostat Rebates!

Receive a \$25 rebate for installing a wi-fi thermostat in your house. Visit www.energywisemnstore.com to purchase your wi-fi thermostat. Members can view all available rebates on our website at www.toddwadena.coop.

Look for these brands offering wi-fi thermostats:

- ✓ Honeywell
- ✓ Nest (pictured)
- ✓ ecobee
- ✓ LUX
- ✓ Emerson

ENERGY WISE 

www.energywisemnstore.com

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Energy used for cooling and heating your home makes up the largest portion of your monthly energy bills.

By combining regular equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing, and thermostat settings, you can save about 30% on your energy bills while helping our environment.

Source: www.energy.gov



Keep track of your energy usage via an app on your mobile device! Download **SmartHub** on iOS or Android app stores today!



Save on Your Heating Costs with Dual Fuel

ELECTRIC PLENUM HEATER

Go dual fuel by inserting an electric plenum heater into a new or existing fossil fuel furnace. Air is heated as it flows across electric elements and is distributed through existing duct work.

In addition to low electricity rates, Todd-Wadena members receive a \$500 rebate towards the purchase of a plenum heater (*new program enrollment only*).

If you are interested in this type of dual fuel system, contact your local heating contractor first to see if a plenum heater would work with your existing fossil fuel furnace.



REBATES

- \$35/kW (up to 10kW) for installing electric, non-storage, in-floor heating.
- \$50/kW (up to 10 kW) for storage heat such as storage furnaces.
- \$500 for installing a plenum heater. **New program enrollment only/10kW minimum.**
- \$400/ton for installing an Energy Star rated ground source heat pump.
- \$480 to \$630 (*varies by SEER rating*) for installing an air source heat pump. **Rebates available only through QI installer program.**
- \$300 to \$500 for installing a ductless air source heat pump. Must be Energy Star rated.

RATES

Todd-Wadena offers its members a low dual fuel heating rate of just **5.1¢ per kWh**. It is a requirement of the dual heat program to have a non-electric, automatic backup heat system that is large enough to heat the whole house (*i.e. propane, fuel oil, or natural gas*).

DUAL FUEL MEMBERS: PLEASE CHECK YOUR BACK-UP SYSTEM

If you have a **Dual Fuel Heating System**, now is the time to be sure your back-up heating system is prepared and that you have adequate fuel supply.

- Dual Fuel Heating Systems are usually controlled during periods of high demand (such as frigid winter evenings), but other factors such as high market cost can lead to load control as well.
- There can be up to 400 hours of control during the heating season. However, most winters the control has averaged 100 to 120 hours.
- It can happen any time of the day, but typically will be during the early evening (4:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.).
- Participants should expect 16-20 control days this winter, with most occurring between December and February.

Receive Dual Fuel Load Control Notifications with SmartHub

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



Set Up Dual Fuel Load Control Notifications

SmartHub: Sign in (or create an account) at <https://toddwadena.smarthub.coop>. If you haven't previously added a contact for notifications, you will need to start at the first step, otherwise go to the second step to enable Dual Heat Control notifications.

1

Add Contacts: Click *Notifications* in the navigation menu, then select *Manage Contacts*. Add an email contact and/or a phone contact*. Follow directions and enter verification code where appropriate.

2

Set Up Notifications: Click *Notifications* again, and select *Manage Notifications*. Select *Reports*, then choose *Dual Heat Control*. Click *Options* and select the contact(s) you wish to receive load control notifications.

* To ensure you receive notifications when adding a phone contact, please make sure "No" is selected next to "Place on Do Not Call List".

'Sota Grown Collaborators Mark a Year of Success *(continued from page 1)*

and water usage, monitor growing conditions, deliver wholesome produce year-round, and measure crop output to help determine the financial viability of these systems for other producers.”

Allison Uselman, Member & Energy Services Manager at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC), said while this project is embracing the beneficial use of electricity to find ways that may help the state’s agriculture community in the future, it is not intended to be a replacement for traditional farming.

“Our cooperative was built by local farmers and our agriculture community continues to play a significant role in our operations,” Uselman said.

One of the factors that went into Great River Energy and the Electric Power Research Institute’s decision to choose TWEC for this pilot project is its location, specifically its geographical position within

a USDA defined “low-income access” area. This means many community members there face both economic and distance challenges to access fresh, healthy food on a routine basis.

The pilot project’s success has already created a blueprint that is being replicated around the state: A few additional projects have sprung up with help from some of Great River Energy’s member-owner cooperatives. As more electricity generated by the cooperatives is from renewable energy resources, the electricity used to power projects like ‘Sota Grown becomes cleaner, too.

“Twenty-five percent of the electricity Great River Energy generates today is renewables and, in just two years, that will increase to 50%

as we plan to add 900 megawatts of wind energy by the end of 2023,” said Mark Fagan, Vice President and Chief Corporate and Member Services Officer at Great River Energy. “We look forward to seeing the even greater potential indoor food production has in Minnesota’s future, and how our electric cooperatives can be part of it.”

Visit ‘Sota Grown on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SotaGrown to follow along as the project continues to grow fresh produce.








Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative offices will be closed on Wednesday, September 29th for employee training.

Tips for a Safe Harvest



Harvest season brings hard work and can be exhausting, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous (even deadly!) when working near overhead power lines. We urge farm operators and workers to keep the following safety tips in mind:

-  **Use care when operating large machinery near power lines.**
-  **Inspect the height of equipment to determine clearance.**
-  **Always keep equipment at least 10 feet away (in all directions) from power lines.**
-  **Remember to lower extensions when moving loads.**
-  **If a power line is sagging or looks to be dangerously low, please call us immediately.**

Back to Regular Office Hours

Our office hours are now back to 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Cold Weather Rule

Each year, some members are unable to pay their electric bill during cold weather months. The *Minnesota Cold Weather Rule* was established to protect residential members from electrical service disconnection between October 1st and April 30th.

Cold Weather Rule protection is available if the following conditions exist:

- The disconnection would affect your main heating source
- You and Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative agree on a payment plan
- You have returned the Cold Weather Rule form to TWEC

**Cold Weather Rule form will be mailed with all September bills.*

The Cold Weather Rule does not prevent winter disconnections. If you have a DISCONNECTION NOTICE on your bill between October 1st and April 30th, you must act before the disconnect date on the bill.

TO AVOID DISCONNECTION BETWEEN OCTOBER 1ST AND APRIL 30TH YOU MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

1. Set Up a Payment Plan

If you receive a disconnect notice on your bill, you must call and set up a mutually agreed upon monthly payment plan before the disconnect date on the bill. This payment plan must be kept current to be protected by the Cold Weather Rule and avoid disconnection.

2. Return the CWR Form

Complete the Cold Weather Rule form and return it to TWEC before the disconnect date on your bill. You may complete this form online at www.toddwadena.coop.

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

Pine to Prairie News

A monthly publication for
members and friends of



Todd-Wadena
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

www.toddwadena.coop

Office Hours: 8:00am - 4:30pm
Monday - Friday

Telephone: (218) 631-3120 or
(800) 321-8932

Email: todd-wad@toddwadena.coop

Address: 550 Ash Avenue NE
P.O. Box 431
Wadena, MN 56482

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Marie Katterhagen, Secretary
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Gene Kern, Director
Kristine Spadgenske, Director

Daniel Carlisle, President/CEO &
General Counsel

LOCAL ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS

Todd County:

Troy Bak (320) 760-1017

Wadena County:

Adam Sorensen (320) 304-3927

District 5 (Todd County):

Mark Hunter (320) 616-5574

District 6 (Wadena County):

Sheldon Monson (218) 689-3260

If your electric power goes out:

First, make sure the problem is not on your side. (Members may be billed for service calls if the problem is caused by their own equipment.) Check fuses and circuit breakers in your home and by the meter pole. (Call us for help, if necessary.)

Second, check with your neighbors to see if they have power. Then call Todd-Wadena to report the problem. Give your name and account number. Then report any tree branches, twisted wires, broken poles, and whether or not your neighbors are also out of power.

Before digging call:

Gopher State One-Call
811 or (800) 252-1166

Find us on  

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

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 431

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Pancake BREAKFAST & OPEN HOUSE

	Date	September 18th	
	Time	8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.	
	Location	TWEC Headquarters	

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 September 25th.

Leland Moyer of Verndale was the winner of our August Reader's Contest.

1. We are hosting an *Electric Vehicle* _____ & *Drive* event at the same time as the *Pancake Breakfast & Open House* event.
2. Sealing cracks and making sure your attic is properly _____ will not only help save you money in heating cost, but could help reduce your risk of an ice dam.
3. Join us for the Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, September _____.

Name:

Your TWEC Account Number:

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