



Director Candidates Selected

The 2023 Nominating Committee met on January 25th to select candidates for the 2023 director elections. Three seats on the Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative Board of Directors will expire at the Annual Meeting on April 18th, 2023.

The committee nominated incumbents *Dale Adams*, *Gene Kern*, and *Kristine Spadgenske*, as well as *Gary Kneisl* and *Darrin Savoie*.

Next month's newsletter, the March *Pine to Prairie*, will have profiles of each candidate (profiles will also be in the ballot packets that all members receive).

How to Vote

In March, ballot packets with voting instructions will be mailed to members 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 and Ballot Systems will tabulate alternative options that include electronic voting and onsite voting at the Annual Meeting on April 18th.

2023 Annual Meeting is Tuesday, April 18th

Save the date for our 2023 Annual Meeting! The meeting will be Tuesday, April 18th, 2023 at the **Maslowski Wellness & Research Center** in Wadena, MN. Bring the entire family! Children will be able to enjoy free swimming before and during the business meeting. A meal will follow the business meeting.

Schedule

3:30 p.m. Registration Opens

4:00 p.m. Deep Dive Session
Free Swim

4:30 p.m. Bingo

5:30 p.m. Business Meeting (with meal to follow)





Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO &
General Counsel

2023 Legislation – Carbon Free by 2040

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative and other rural electric cooperatives across our state share a common goal of providing safe, reliable, and affordable power for our members. We have a long history of coming together to serve people in rural communities. Over the years, cooperatives have adapted our business practices to continue providing reliable and affordable energy – even though the industry is changing at a rapid pace.

Current legislation could force utilities to change at an even faster pace. Cooperatives are joining forces to voice concern about this legislation. On January 5, the Minnesota Legislature proposed a bill to transition all electricity sold in the state to be carbon free by 2040. The bill included interim goals along the road to 2040 including 80% by 2030 and 90% by 2035. This bill also included an increase to the renewable energy standard (RES) of 55% by 2035. The bill only provided off-ramps (exceptions) by having the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) review a filing. It is then up to the PUC to approve.

We have many concerns regarding this bill. To be 100% carbon free by 2040 is a very aggressive timeline

and a decade faster than many other states. We are concerned that without proper planning, this aggressive goal will make it difficult to continue to provide reliable and affordable energy to our members. Minnesotans are already experiencing rising costs of goods and services throughout the economy. Developing new renewable generation facilities, equipment, and infrastructure to support carbon free energy will take significant time and money. Forcing premature energy resource decisions through mandates, as is the case in the proposed legislation, will only drive costs up further.

Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) recently issued warnings about potential energy shortfalls during extreme weather in the Midwest. These warnings extend year-round for the next several years. In fact, on December 23rd, 2022, MISO declared a maximum generation emergency event to maintain the reliability of the electric system. These maximum generation events are warnings that the system is nearing a point where rotating power outages may be required. This is predicted to happen more frequently in the coming years. We are concerned that mandated carbon free power will exacerbate this concern.

Minnesota's rural electric cooperatives, along with the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) and Great River Energy (GRE), are coming together to make our voices heard. Legislators need to understand the concerns of reliability and affordability – that's what matters to us and our members. Through a joint effort, we were able to achieve a few beneficial changes to the final bill package. Although this is a great start, there is still a long way to go. The amendments to the bill include:

- 1) Allowing a single renewable energy credit (REC) to be used for both complying with the renewable energy standard (RES) and complying with the carbon free standards.
- 2) Allowing the carbon free portion of a carbon emitting generation resource to count towards compliance with the carbon free standards. This would apply most clearly to carbon capture generation. In this case, 80% of the megawatt hours from a coal plant with 80% carbon capture would be considered carbon free, dramatically reducing the number of RECs needed to comply with the carbon free standards. This provision would also encompass gas generation with green or purple (nuclear) hydrogen fuel blends.

Help Keep Energy Reliable & Affordable in Minnesota

Learn more and sign up at voicesforcooperativpower.com/minnesota

- 3) Allowing the carbon free portion of ISO market (or sub-market) energy purchases to count towards compliance with the carbon free standards. The carbon free portion would be based on the ISO's annual average fuel mix.
- 4) Directing the PUC to consider electrification as a basis for moderating the carbon free standards in any "off-ramp" proceedings.
- 5) Reducing the 2030 carbon free milestone standard from 80% carbon free energy generation to 60%. Investor-owned utilities are not included in this provision, and will need to meet the 80% level.

Plus, large hydro power stays within the legislation to be counted toward RES and carbon free generation.

While these amendments were a baby step in the right direction, only these five of many proposed amendments were accepted. As this article goes to press, the bill will go to the Senate. However, with a DFL controlled Senate, it is likely they will agree with the House and the bill will pass. This will put pressure on our industry. Minnesota cooperatives, along with GRE, will have to do the best we can in light of this legislation. We are committed to continuing to try to provide our members with affordable and reliable energy.

Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO & General Counsel

Sign up for **Voices for Cooperative Power** by scanning this QR code with your mobile device



Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is just one of 50 electric cooperatives that serves rural energy consumers in Minnesota. We have partnered with other Minnesota cooperatives through our statewide organization, Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), and our national organization, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), to ensure we have a voice at the table this legislative session. We want to make sure cooperative voices are heard when it comes to energy policy in Minnesota.

Help us advocate for reliable and affordable energy for all of Minnesota's energy consumers by signing up for **Voices for Cooperative Power (VCP)**. This network of electric cooperative member-consumers is working to ensure the needs of rural America are reflected in state and national policy decisions.



Board Minutes

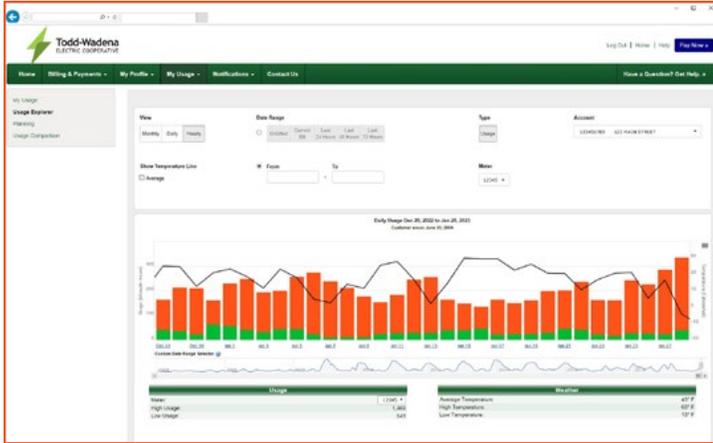
Highlights from the December 22nd, 2022, regular board meeting:

- CEO Dan Carlisle updated the board on a recent Great River Energy (GRE) meeting regarding the 5 percent option topic.
- Board Member Mike Thorson gave the GRE report. November's revenue came in ahead of budget. GRE is focusing on lobbying efforts as the Minnesota legislature is pushing for carbon free mandates by 2040.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the November financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 1 percent over budget. Energy revenue was 2 percent over budget. November's purchased power expense was 8 percent over budget. Tier is 1.16 and Equity is 40.16.
- TWEC's 2023 Budget and 10-Year Forecast were approved as presented.
- Member & Energy Services Manager Allison Frederickson introduced Voices for Cooperative Power. This is a group individuals can enroll in that keeps people connected on legislative topics related to cooperatives.
- Operations Manager Tyler Fisher gave a progress update on demolition at the Leaf River Substation, work plan projects, and the FEMA process. He also discussed the December 14-16th winter storm that affected 950 members.
- Board Member Dale Adams gave the STAR Energy report. STAR continues to do well and will end the year with a substantial margin.
- Board Chair Miles Kuschel discussed a variety of legislative topics, including a shift of terms going from "green energy" to "carbon free".

Track Your Energy Usage With SmartHub

During periods of cold weather like we've experienced recently, our heating systems work extra hard to keep our homes comfortable. It's important to understand how temperature and your electric usage correlate with each other. **SmartHub**, a free online tool and mobile app available to all Todd-Wadena members, gives you the ability to view your electrical energy usage at monthly,

daily, or hourly intervals for any date range. You can also overlay an average temperature line over your usage to compare spikes to temperature fluctuations. This is a great tool to help explain energy usage on your bill and assist you in making informed decisions about energy use. Visit our website and click on *SmartHub* under *Quicklinks* to get started!



How to Find Your Energy Usage

1. Log into SmartHub
2. Under the *My Usage* tab, click on Usage Explorer
3. View monthly, daily, or hourly usage and choose a pre-defined date range (*unbilled, current bill, last 24 hours, last 48 hours, last 72 hours*), or a specific date range and time.



ENERGY STAR Appliance Rebates

Rebates are available for the purchase of new ENERGY STAR rated appliances. For more information, contact us at (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321- 8932, or visit www.toddwadena.coop.



Freezer/Refrigerator <i>(with recycling)</i>	\$50 rebate	<i>Must be Energy Star rated</i>
Clothes Dryer	\$25 rebate	<i>Must be Energy Star rated</i>
Dehumidifier	\$25 rebate	<i>Must be Energy Star rated</i>
Ductless ASHP	\$300 rebate	<i>Must be Energy Star rated</i>

Do You Know the Difference Between *EnergyGuide* and **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 the descriptions to the right 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.



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.



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.

Know the Signs of a Scam

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas, or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since the Covid-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school, and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Imposter scams are the number one type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone, or text.

Common Types of Scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text, or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment so you don't have time to think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321- 8932. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, www.toddwadena.coop. If the

scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact us or use SmartHub to check the status of your account. Remember, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC) will never attempt to demand immediate payment after just one notice.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a social security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), do not click any links. Instead, delete it and, if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, TWEC will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.

Defend Yourself Against Scams

Be wary of calls or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

Never let anyone you don't know into your home unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem. TWEC employees wear shirts with our logo on them. When we perform work

on a member's property or come into your home, our employees are professionals and will always identify themselves.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.

Ways to Pay Your Bill

Pay by Phone

Call (877) 999-3398 to pay your bill by phone 24 hours a day with a major credit/debit card (*MasterCard, VISA, or Discover*) or by providing your checking or savings account information. Please have your account number ready; it can be found on the top right hand corner of your Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative bill.

Use SmartHub

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative offers the latest technology to help you manage your electric account 24/7 by computer or smartphone with a free online application called SmartHub.

- ▶ Make a payment
- ▶ Check your electric usage
- ▶ Notify us of account issues
- ▶ Receive emails or alerts
- ▶ Communicate with the cooperative
- ▶ Sign up for load control notifications
- ▶ Dual fuel load control notification instructions
- ▶ Commercial and irrigation load control notification instructions

SmartHub is easy to navigate. It's simple and quick to make a payment or view energy usage.



Tyler Fisher Promoted to Operations Manager!

Tyler Fisher was promoted to Operations Manager, which started on December 1st, 2022. With more than a decade of experience in the electric industry, his primary focus is to oversee the construction, operation, and maintenance of Todd-Wadena's distribution system and act as the head of TWEC's safety program.

Fisher and his team, which includes lineworkers, a warehouse specialist, a purchasing agent, and a mechanic, will continue to be proactive with the maintenance of facilities and equipment, while continually being dedicated to providing safe, reliable, and affordable energy to the members TWEC serves.

"Tyler brings a wealth of experience, qualifications, and leadership qualities. We are excited about his new role at the cooperative. Without a doubt, having Tyler at the helm of the Operations Department will be a great asset to our team and to our members," said Dan Carlisle, CEO/President & General Counsel of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative.

Fisher started his career at TWEC in 2013 as a staking technician. In that position, he worked face to face with members and property owners on new construction projects, service upgrades, locating, line rebuilds, and obtaining easements. Prior to his career at Todd-Wadena, Fisher was a journeyman lineworker at Crow Wing Power in Brainerd.

He lives near Verndale with his wife and their three children. Fisher grew up working on the family farm with his dad and grandpa. "I recognize the importance of our cooperative's role in our agricultural community and will work hard to provide safe, reliable, and fiscally responsible electric service to all of our members," he says.

Fisher is also involved in the community; he is a volunteer fireman/first responder with the Verndale Fire Department and was recently elected to serve on the Verndale School Board. "Growing up on the farm, I was taught neighbors are not just those who live next door. Neighbors are all the members of our community. As members of our cooperative, I consider us all neighbors," he remarks.

Congratulations, Tyler!

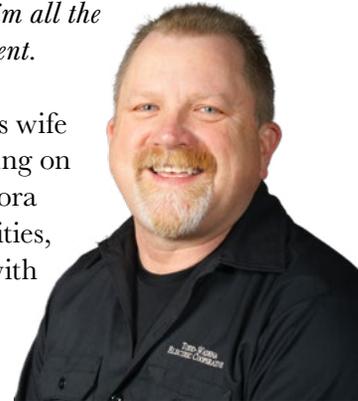


Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Retirement

Congratulations to Greg Jacobson who retired after 33 years at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative. Jacobson started his tenure at Todd-Wadena in March of 1989 as a Load Management Technician. He most recently held a title as Energy Management Technician where he was responsible for implementing and maintaining the technical and operations aspects of metering and load management programs at the cooperative, along with meter installations. His last day at the co-op was Friday, December 30th, 2022. *We wish him all the best in his retirement.*

Jacobson and his wife Lidia are planning on enjoying a plethora of outdoor activities, spending time with their five grandchildren, and enjoying life.



New Staking Technician

Luke Wilhelmi took over as the Staking Technician at Todd-Wadena on January 16th, 2023. As a staking technician, he is responsible for the preparation of engineering/construction plans for new and existing electrical services to members, as well as researching, negotiating, and obtaining easement and right-of-way documentation.

Wilhelmi started at Todd-Wadena in March of 2017 as a Journeyman Lineworker. Prior to that he worked as a Safety Specialist for Minnesota Rural Electric Association. *Congratulations on your new position!*



Years of Service Awards



15 Years

Jamie Line

Journeyman
Lineworker/Crew Chief



15 Years

Lori Redetzke

Member Services
Representative



5 Years

Luke Wilhelmi

Staking Technician



5 Years

Kallie Van De Venter

Marketing & Commu-
nications Specialist

Meals 4 Members

DELIVERING MORE THAN JUST ELECTRICITY!

We are continuing to collect food items for our *Meals 4 Members* program which serves Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC) members in need. Your food donations are gathered and then distributed directly to members who can use assistance. Please donate **unexpired goods** or **non-perishable food items** now through April. Monetary donations are also welcome.

If you are in need, please fill out a one-time *Meals 4 Members* home delivery request form by visiting our website, www.toddwadena.coop, or by calling Kallie at (218) 632-3216.

Dan Carlisle, TWEC's President/CEO is delivering *Meals 4 Members* home delivery baskets on a weekly basis now through April. Sign up or call if you are in need.



Note: Meals 4 Members is available for Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative members. Requests will be added to a delivery list.



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

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

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

Website: www.toddwadena.coop

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

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 431

Wadena, MN 56482

Printed on recycled paper.

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage

PAID
DPC

February Reader's Contest

1. The 2023 Annual Meeting is set for Tuesday, April _____ in Wadena.
2. _____ is a free online tool and mobile app available to all Todd-Wadena members where you can check your energy usage, view your bill, sign up for load notifications and more!
3. We are collecting unexpired and non-perishable _____ items for Meals 4 Members.

Name:

Your TWEC Account Number:

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

For your chance to be entered in a drawing to win a \$10 credit on your bill, correctly answer the questions and include with your TWEC bill. Mail to TWEC, P.O. Box 431, Wadena, MN 56482. Or email the answers to mbrservices@toddwadena.coop with the subject line "Reader's Contest". Be sure to include your name and TWEC service address. Entries must be received by February 25th.

Kevin & Tracy Tomperi of Menahga was the winner of our January Reader's Contest.