



## Official Notice of Annual Meeting

Please take notice that a regular meeting of the members of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative will be held at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The meeting will be held at the *Maslowski Wellness and Research Center* at 17 5<sup>th</sup> Street SW in the City of Wadena, Minnesota, at which time and place the following matters will come before the meeting for consideration:

1. Presentation and consideration of reports of officers and managers.
2. Election of three directors to serve terms of three years. Ballots will be mailed to all members; alternative options will include electronic voting and on-site voting at the Annual Meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Mailed and electronic ballots will be counted as a vote if properly received by 9:00 a.m. CST on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The Nominating Committee selected the following nominees whose names will appear on the ballot for terms expiring in 2026: *Dale Adams, Gene Kern, Kristine Spadgenske, Gary Kneisl, and Darrin Savoie.*
3. Any other business to properly come before this meeting.

**Marie Katterhagen, Secretary**

## 2023 Annual Meeting is Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>

Make plans to attend our 2023 Annual Meeting! The meeting will be Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 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.

Deep Dive: Learn more about how **Vegetation Management** increases reliability and dependability!

### Schedule

**3:30 p.m.** Registration Opens

**4:00 p.m.** Deep Dive Session: *Vegetation Management*  
Free Swim

**4:30 p.m.** Bingo

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



## MREA Annual Meeting

I had the opportunity to attend Minnesota Rural Electric Association's (MREA) Annual Meeting in St. Paul this February. Joining me were several of Todd-Wadena's directors (Miles Kuschel, Tom Brichacek, and Kristine Spadgenske) and TWEC Member and Energy Services Manager Allison Frederickson. This is always time well spent as we get to meet one-on-one with our local legislators. The meeting provides an opportunity to discuss topics and issues that are close to home and important to our members.

We met with Senator Jordan Rasmusson (*District 9*), Senator Paul Utke (*District 5*), Representative Mike Wiener (*District 5B*), and Senator Torrey Westrom (*District 12*) to discuss the following topics.

### **Defend Rural Electrification Property Tax Exemption**

Since 1939, the Department of Revenue has excluded cooperative owned rural meters and streetlights from a rural electrification property tax exemption. This property tax exemption is critical for ensuring rural Minnesotans continue to receive affordable electric service.

### **Exempt Replacement of Co-op/Muni Load Control Receivers from Unnecessary State Requirements**

The replacement of load control receiver (LCR) equipment should not have to be inspected and permitted while upgrading it to modernize cooperative electric grids and facilitate energy efficiency programs as part of the energy transition.

### **Support State Matching Funds and Technical Assistance to Unlock Federal Infrastructure Funding**

MREA, along with other organizations (MMUA, Minnesota Power, LIUNA Labors Union, etc.), support an appropriation for state matching funds that would help unlock federal funding for grid reliability, public EV charging, and other projects through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. It is important that rural Minnesota receives its fair share of this funding.

### **Defend Regulatory Compact Against Third-Party Encroachment**

We oppose any third-party encroachment on the exclusivity of co-op service territories because that encroachment unravels the regulatory compact, encourages cherry-picking of co-op members by third parties, increases rates to the remaining customers, and undermines the ability of co-ops to make the investments necessary to provide reliable and affordable service to our members.

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's staff and board work hard to stay informed and create good rapport with our legislators in this fast-paced industry to try and impact legislative issues that will affect our members. Now, and into the future, we are committed to providing reliable and affordable energy for our members.



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

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



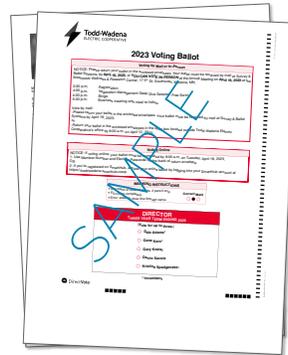


## 2023 Director Candidate Voting Options

Cooperatives are *democratic entities*, owned by those they serve and governed by elected representatives. In order to underscore this important cooperative principle, we offer multiple ways to cast your vote.

### 1 VOTE BY MAIL OR DROP BOX

Election ballots are scheduled to be mailed to all Todd-Wadena members March 14<sup>th</sup>. The ballots will look like the sample to the right. The order of candidate names will be rotated among ballots. After marking your votes, you will be instructed to insert your completed ballot into a *secret ballot envelope*, and then to seal and place that envelope into a pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelope to return by mail.



#### NOTICE CONCERNING MAILING ENVELOPES

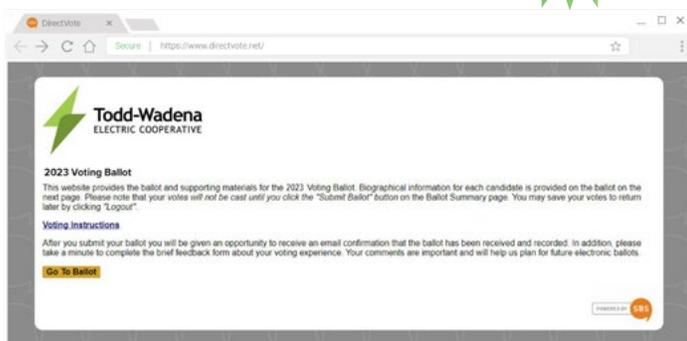
There are two envelopes to be returned with each ballot. One is the **pre-addressed** envelope to *Survey & Ballot Systems*, the other is the **secret ballot envelope**. It is very important that the ballot is first placed into the secret ballot envelope, and then that envelope is placed into the pre-addressed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

The return envelopes are pre-addressed to *Survey & Ballot Systems (SBS)* in Eden Prairie where the ballots will be secured, scanned, and tallied. SBS is a professional election management company that oversees the balloting process for the cooperative. Ballots must be received by SBS by April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**Additionally, members may drop off their ballot in the appropriate envelopes in TWEC's drop box by 9:00 a.m. on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

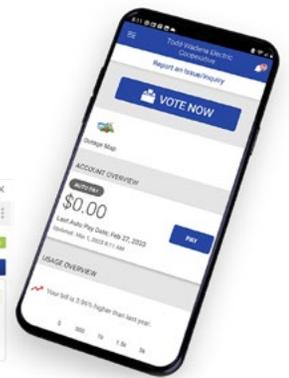
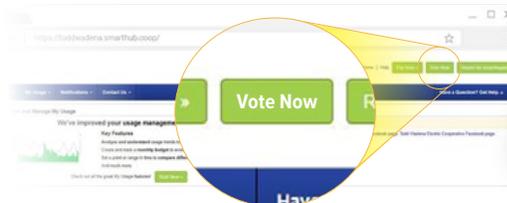
### 2 VOTE ONLINE VIA DIRECTVOTE

There will be instructions with the ballots you receive in the mail on how you can vote online using DirectVote. You will **not** need a SmartHub account in order to vote this way. Once you've authenticated through the DirectVote page, follow the directions to cast your vote. Ballots must be cast by 9:00 a.m. on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023.



### 3 VOTE ONLINE VIA SMARTHUB

Log into your SmartHub account and look for the "Vote Now" button in the upper right corner. Also, you can vote from your SmartHub mobile app!



### 4 VOTE AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

As always, there will be an opportunity to cast your vote at the Annual Meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup>. Votes cast at the Annual Meeting will be scanned and tallied on-site by SBS and added to the mailed and electronic ballot tally.

**Results of the balloting will be announced at the close of the Annual Meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup> and printed in the May issue of *Pine to Prairie News*.**

# 2023 Board Candidates

WATCH CANDIDATE VIDEOS ON OUR WEBSITE AND ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

## DALE ADAMS

Dale and his wife Susan enjoy life in the country on a farm south of Aldrich. Susan has retired from teaching art at Motley and Dale has been self-employed as an electrical contractor since receiving a degree in electrical engineering from the U of M. He is also involved with several rental properties in the Staples area. They have one son currently living in Fargo.

Dale was elected to the Todd-Wadena board in 1996 and currently serves as Treasurer. In 2012, he was appointed to represent TWEC on the STAR Energy Services Board. He is also Treasurer and Trustee for the Church of Christ in Staples. After serving 25 years on the Bartlett Township board, he continues to serve the township as an election judge.

He feels a challenge for the Cooperative is the ability to maintain reliability when there is a push to move to all renewable energy. Wind

output varies and solar doesn't produce much energy when there are overcast skies and even less at night! Another interesting challenge will be dealing with the transition to electric cars. However, the greatest threat he sees to the reliability of our electricity is the new Minnesota legislation requiring 100% of our electricity to be generated carbon free by 2040. He said, "It has been called the 'Blackout bill' by some for good reason."

Dale has been involved with electricity most of his life, from troubleshooting electrical problems to wiring buildings. He said, "My time on the board at TWEC has given me insight into the power supply side of the industry. It is enjoyable to serve on the board of a cooperative that has such dedicated and knowledgeable employees working for the benefit of our members. I would be happy to continue to represent you on the board."



## KRISTINE SPADGENSKE

Kristine and her husband Mark live eight miles west of Menahga where they dairy farm in a partnership with Mark's brother, Mike. They milk 350 cows and farm 1,000 acres. Kristine and Mark have four children, Ryan (wife Jen), Kate, Adam, and Seth.

Kristine has been the clerk for Runeberg Township for the last 17 years. She currently serves as Director on DFA Co-op Central Area Council, and serves as Corporate Board Director; Director on the Minnesota Division Board, where she serves as Chair; and Corporate Board Director for Midwest Dairy. Her family actively attends First English Church.

Kristine and Mark have been members of Todd-Wadena since 1994. "I have always been impressed with the customer service, management of lines to decrease outages, and cost savings programs, as well as lower rates compared to other cooperatives in the area. I support and believe in the grass-roots governances of a co-op. It is vitally

important that we maintain the importance of member-ownership, protect their equity investment, and make financially sound decisions," said Kristine.

Kristine has served on the Todd-Wadena board since 2019, when she was appointed to fill a vacancy. She says it has been a privilege representing the members and working with a great board and fantastic employees. In December of 2021, Kristine completed her Credentialed Cooperative Director training. "I believe the more information and knowledge I can gain about the utility world allows me to make better decisions for our members," she said.

Kristine understands the importance of maintaining good communication with our legislatures and helping them understand how their decisions will affect TWEC. "Though we're well on our way to fulfill the mandates of the Renewable Energy Standard, these changes must also be economically viable for our members," she comments.



## GENE KERN



Gene Kern is a lifelong resident of the Bluegrass area in Wadena County where he and his wife of 40 years Jan continue to reside on their farm. They have two children, Sarah and Adam, and five grandchildren.

Gene graduated from Sebeka High School and from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Agricultural Education. After 25 years of dairy farming, Gene now raises beef and hay. He is also a substitute teacher and has spent the past several summers working for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture with the Invasive Species Programs. Gene is a Trustee at St. Hubert's Catholic Church in Bluegrass.

A Todd-Wadena director since 1996, Gene currently serves on Todd-Wadena's Safety Commit-

tee and has taken the classes necessary to be a fully-accredited electric cooperative director.

"Energy issues impact each of us," Gene said, "and electric cooperative directors are challenged to keep current with research and development of future energy technologies. My goal is to help ensure that Todd-Wadena continues to provide safe, efficient, and reliable energy at the lowest possible rates."

He also feels it is important to stay current on political mandates and keep good relationships with local and state politicians.

"We must work with our elected officials, and keep them informed about the issues that affect central Minnesota," Gene said.

## GARY KNEISL

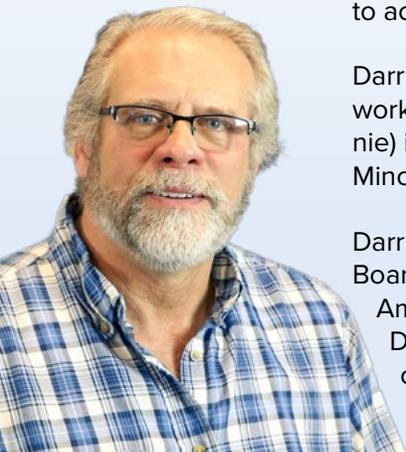


Gary Kneisl and his wife of 42 years Kathy live in rural Verndale. Gary and Kathy have four children and six grandchildren. After graduating high school, Gary went into partnership with his dad milking cows until 1996 when his father retired. Gary bought him out and continued the dairy farm until 2003 when he sold the cows and raised beef feeders. Gary has center pivot irrigation systems. His oldest son is taking over the farm, and Gary has since semi-retired, helping out as the hired hand when needed. Gary was a Todd County

Commissioner for 16 years, ending in 2022, and is active in the Hewitt Lions Club.

Gary believes the big changes and challenges for Todd-Wadena, and for other electric cooperatives, will be mandates for solar, wind, and electric vehicles. He also believes that another challenge for Todd-Wadena in the future will be to continue to provide reliable electricity to Todd-Wadena members with the upcoming mandates. He would like to help find ways to keep the cost of electricity affordable for members due to those mandates.

## DARRIN SAVOIE



Darrin Savoie has a small farm south of Eagle Bend. Darrin moved into the area in 1988 after graduating from St. Cloud State University to dairy farm with his father-in-law. Darrin also raises beef cattle and pigs. In October of 2002, he accepted the position of manager of The Nelson Creamery and has been there ever since. He served on the creamery board for six years prior to accepting his manager position.

Darrin has two children. His daughter Amanda works at Nelson Creamery. His son Sam (Britnie) is in the Air Force and they are stationed in Minot, ND with their six children.

Darrin previously served on the Todd County Fair Board, and is currently on the Douglas County American Dairy Board for the past 20 years.

Darrin has also served on the nominating committee for First District Association (dairy cooperative) for the past 20 years.

Darrin has always encouraged his dairy producers to be involved with their co-ops. "I figured I should take my own advice," said Darrin. "I heard the ad on the radio and believe with my co-op experience, I would be a good candidate."

When asked what challenges he sees for Todd-Wadena in the future, Darrin said, "Energy is always going to be a major component in society. The next few years are going to be interesting with new mandates being filtered through the legislature and I would like to help guide the way."

To meet these challenges Darrin believes that Todd-Wadena needs to continue to be on the leading edge and stay informed in all aspects of the industry. He also believes that it is important to find qualified candidates to run for the Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative Board of Directors.

## Vegetation Management: Right-of-Way and Spraying

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



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

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

This policy allows TWEC to responsibly provide safe and reliable energy to our members. The process of implementing this policy is called *Vegetation Management*. Strategies used to minimize vegetation growth that could cause issues near power lines include tree pruning, brush removal, mowing, and spraying.

TWEC Arborist Joe Sworski is responsible for lining up work for TWEC crews and our vegetation management contractor Carr's Tree Service. Work consists of side trimming, removals, and mowing. Our goal is to reach all areas of our system once every 10 years, without going from spot to spot. This helps us keep the lights on and the blink count minimal.

This spring, TWEC is mowing and spraying all circuits coming out of the *Iona, Eagle Bend, Hewitt, and Compton* substations. TWEC has contracted this service out to **Central Applicators**. Central Applicators will notify members in those areas on the timeline of the spraying via a letter in the mail. ***Please read this letter completely and let Central Applicators know if there are any issues.*** Look for their logo on the letter/envelope (pictured to the right).

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



## Board Minutes

*Highlights from the January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, regular board meeting:*

- CEO Dan Carlisle discussed a recent Member Managers Group meeting that focused on the 2040 Carbon-Free bill and how it will impact the electrical industry. He also highlighted several topics from the recent CEO Close Up conference, including technology and cyber security; inventory and supply chain challenges; infrastructure hardening; and rate structure.
- The board approved the 2023 Legal Retainer with Pemberton Law Firm. Chad Festul will now be the primary attorney representing TWEC.
- Board Member Mike Thorson gave the Great River Energy (GRE) report. John Twiest was announced as the new Member Managers Group Chair. GRE's December financials were positive.
- The board approved a resolution approving Amendment No. 2 and Appendix C related to the 2008 Power Purchase Contract with GRE.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the December and year-end preliminary financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 8 percent over budget, year-end 6 percent over budget. Energy revenue was 6 percent over budget, year-end 5 percent over budget. December's purchased power expense was 3.5 percent under budget, year-end 9 percent over budget. Tier is 1.66 and Equity is 40.23.
- A decision was made to apply \$400,000 in deferred revenue to the 2022 year-end financials.
- CEO of West Central Telephone Association Chad Bullock joined the meeting to discuss broadband access in the cooperative territory and surrounding areas.
- Member & Energy Services Manager Allison Frederickson discussed Winter Storm Elliot and how the MISO Maximum Generation Event affected TWEC.
- Operations Manager Tyler Fisher gave an overview of 2022 activity in the Operations Department. New services continue to be up compared to the 5-year average, mostly due to the increase in new construction and seasonal properties.
- Board Chair Miles Kuschel spent some additional time discussing the 2040 Carbon-Free bill. Even though there have been small adjustments on reduction milestones, the bill still poses a large number of threats to the energy industry.

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

## Local Projects Receive Grants

Giving back to the community we serve is a core cooperative principle. The Operation Round Up program from Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is a great way for the co-op and its members to give back.

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's Community Trust Board recently met and awarded seven Operation Round Up grants to local non-profit organizations, totaling \$9,679.96.

Funds for the Operation Round Up program come from participating Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative members who allow their monthly electric bills to be rounded up to the nearest dollar, with the change allocated to a Community Trust

Fund. The average donation is less than 50 cents a month, yet together, members raise and donate about \$29,000 annually to community service projects in the two-county area. Since the program's inception in 2002, Todd-Wadena members have raised and donated more than \$605,000 for 743 local community projects.

Todd-Wadena's Operation Round Up grant applications are reviewed and recipients selected three times a year by a seven-member volunteer Community Trust Board. The next application deadline is May 15<sup>th</sup>.



Organization		Amount
Clarissa Community Museum, Inc.	Additional Display Cases for Artifacts	\$1,200.00
Evergreen Hill Cemetery Association	Perpetual Care of the Evergreen Hill Cemetery	\$2,450.00
Hands of Hope Resource Center	Emergency Food/Gas Vouchers	\$1,000.00
Sebeka Community Senior Citizens	Replace Lightbulbs	\$836.00
Horizon Health Care	Conference on Aging	\$1,000.00
Central Lakes College Food Pantry	Food Pantry Freezer	\$2,000.00
Wadena Hockey Association	Equipment for all youth levels	\$1,193.96
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$9,679.96</b>

## February 2023 Operation Round Up Grant Recipients

**Back Row (L to R):** Kay Kreklau, Sebeka Community Senior Citizens; Tate McManigle, Wadena Hockey Association; Erich Heppner, Central Lakes College; Bob Reeck, Evergreen Hill Cemetery Association.

**Front Row (L to R):** Monica Merickel, Amanda Schmidt, Wadena Hockey Association; Barb Goodrich, Hands of Hope Resource Center; Rita Stracek, Clarissa Community Museum, Inc.



## Meals 4 Members

Our *Meals 4 Members* program is continuing to collect and distribute food donations 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](http://www.toddwadena.coop), or by calling Kallie at (218) 632-3216.



Allison Frederickson and Kallie Van De Venter load up food baskets for delivery.



## Annual Cogeneration Notification to Membership

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

Use the NOVA Power Portal to find more documentation on interconnection, as well as apply. More information is available at [www.toddwadena.coop/services/renewable-energy](http://www.toddwadena.coop/services/renewable-energy)

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

**Email:** [todd-wad@toddwadena.coop](mailto: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](http://www.facebook.com/toddwadenaelectriccooperative)  
[www.instagram.com/twec.coop](http://www.instagram.com/twec.coop)

## Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 431

Wadena, MN 56482

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DPC

# March Reader's Contest

1. The 2023 Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April \_\_\_\_ at the Maslowski Wellness & Research Center in Wadena.
2. Since the program's inception in 2002, Todd-Wadena members have raised and donated more than \$\_\_\_\_\_ for local community projects.
3. Learn more about Vegetation Management at the \_\_\_\_\_ session prior to the annual meeting.

Name:

Your TWEC Account Number:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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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](mailto:mbrservices@toddwadena.coop) with the subject line "Reader's Contest". Be sure to include your name and TWEC service address. Entries must be received by March 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Donna Ohlgren of Menahga** was the winner of our February Reader's Contest.