



Board of Directors

- Dale Adams
- Tom Brichacek
- Marie Katterhagen
- Gene Keru
- Miles Kuschel
- Kristine Spadgenske
- Mike Thorsou

2024 Calendars

Get your copy of our 2024 calendar! Stop by our office, or by one of our pick-up locations throughout the service territory (*locations listed below*). Limited quantities are available at each location. **Thanks again to all our members who submitted photos!**



Employees

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Nate Bart | Allison Frederickson | Jamie Line | Heidi Smith |
| Josh Byman | Lisa Graba-Meech | Kevin Lupkes | David Snyder |
| Dan Carlisle | Jou Grenier | Jason Okruundt | Lori Tuuoberg |
| Bob Daniels | Brauden Gwiazdow | Jason Orlando | Kallie Van De Venter |
| Brady Erickson | Abby Harrison | Mike Orlando | Trent Walter |
| Melissa Evans | Scott Kangas | Kristen Paurus | Luke Wilhelmui |
| Tyler Fisher | Lisa Kruup | Lori Redetzke | Mary Williams |

Holiday Open House

When: Wednesday, December 20th from 8 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Where: The Lobby at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

New this year! Come anytime during the day to the lobby at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative and grab a cookie and a coffee or hot chocolate!



Meals **4** *Members*

We are also collecting food items for our *Meals 4 Members* program. You can donate **unexpired goods** or **non-perishable food items** at the office. Assistance request forms will be available in January.

Pick-up Locations

- Browerville:** Pro-Ag Farmers' Co-op
501 Railroad Ave.
- Long Prairie:** Long Prairie Chamber of Commerce/Great River Regional Library's Foyer // 43 3rd St. N.
- Menahga:** A Clean Plate Local & Organic Grocery // 13 Birch Ave. SE
- Staples:** True Value // 205 Warner Road NE
- Wadena:** Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative // 550 Ash Avenue NE (Hwy. 10)

Looking Back on 2023

As 2023 comes to an end, I would like to take some time and look back. We have been busy at the cooperative this past year – serving our members, maintaining infrastructure, serving our community, developing and maintaining programs, and so much more.

Here are a few of the 2023 accomplishments brought about as a result of the hard work and dedication of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors and employees:



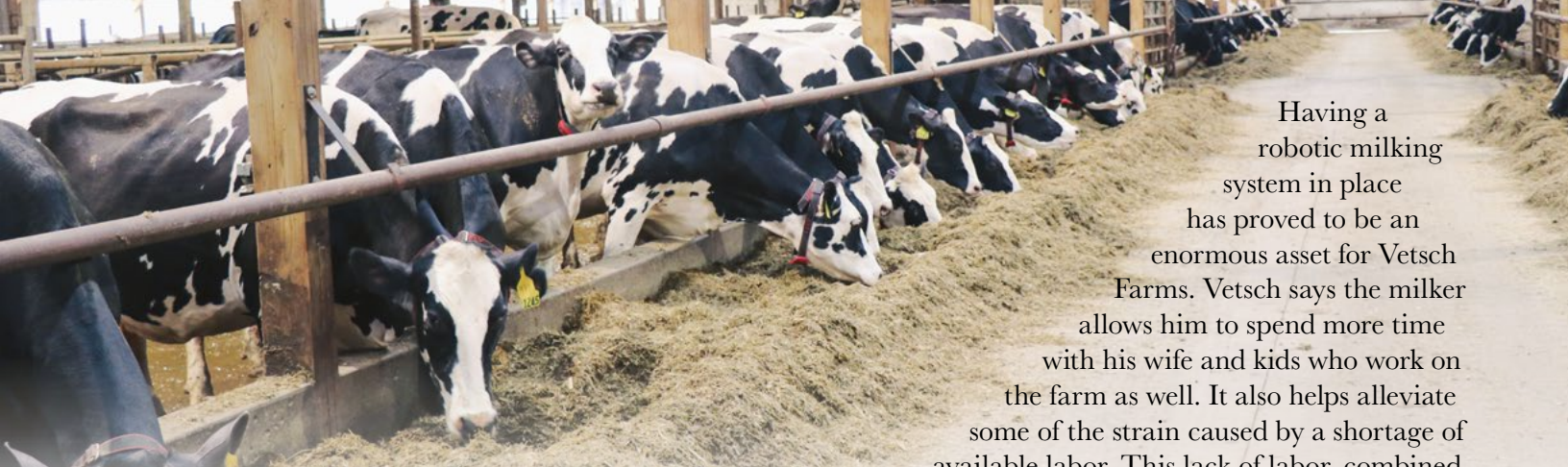
- ◆ The cooperative interconnected **five solar projects** to its distribution system, with three more to go this year.
- ◆ TWEC paid out **\$1,051,000 in capital credits** to members. This includes \$754,000 in capital credit retirements from 2008 from TWEC, and \$297,000 credits from 1993-96 from our wholesale energy provider, Great River Energy.
- ◆ The operations crew built **99 new services** – including overhead, underground, irrigation, and 3-phase.
- ◆ The operations crew efficiently and safely restored **over 240 outages**.
- ◆ Member and Energy Services paid out over **\$105,000 in member rebates** (reimbursed by Great River Energy via the ECO Program).
- ◆ Member and Energy Services continued to **grow and maintain TWEC's load management** programs. These programs offer money saving options to our members, while contributing to Great River Energy's demand side management goals.
- ◆ TWEC's Operation Round Up program **donated over \$35,000** to many deserving organizations in our communities in 2023.
- ◆ Cooperative employees donated more than **60 hours of personal time volunteering** with organizations they are passionate about.
- ◆ TWEC hosted a **successful annual meeting** electing three directors to serve the cooperative for the next three years.

Board Minutes

Highlights from the October 31st, 2023, regular board meeting:

- *A decision was made to hire Output Service Group for the 2024 Director Election.*
- *Board Member Mike Thorson gave the Great River Energy (GRE) report. He reported that GRE is expecting an overall 2024 Budget rate increase averaging approximately 2 percent. Financials continue to remain strong, with September demand 25 percent higher than budgeted.*
- *Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the September financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 3 percent over budget. Energy revenue was 16 percent over budget. September's purchased power expense was 9 percent over budget. Tier is 1.24 and Equity is 40.59.*
- *The board approved the budgeted Capital Credit Retirement of \$1,051,000 (TWEC \$754,000; GRE \$297,000).*
- *Brady Martz was hired for a three-year auditor contract.*
- *Operations Manager Tyler Fisher discussed how he worked with STAR Energy to create a new vegetation management mapping application that allows for real-time tracking of each stage. The application will be used by TWEC and all contracted vegetation services.*
- *Executive Assistant/Cyber Security Specialist Abby Harrison presented the annual Cyber Security Report to the board. The Cyber Incident Response Plan (CIRP) has been completed.*
- *TWEC's Operation Round Up program awarded \$11,600 to area organizations.*

Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO & General Counsel



Having a robotic milking system in place has proved to be an enormous asset for Vetsch Farms. Vetsch says the milker allows him to spend more time with his wife and kids who work on the farm as well. It also helps alleviate some of the strain caused by a shortage of available labor. This lack of labor, combined with a growing business, prompted the decision to switch to a robotic system.

Business Spotlight Vetsch Farms

In the labor-intensive dairy farming industry, robots are making farmers' lives just a little bit easier.



One of Vetsch Farm's five robotic milkers.

Imagine a cow walking into a box, being milked and fed, and then released – all without human involvement. A robotic milker is now doing all of the above at Vetsch Farms east of Browerville, Minnesota.

Owner Loren Vetsch explains how the milker works in more detail, “The cows walk into the box and it reads their collars. Each cow has its own collar with a special ID. The system milks the cows and feeds them at the same time. Then it opens up when they’re done and lets them out.”

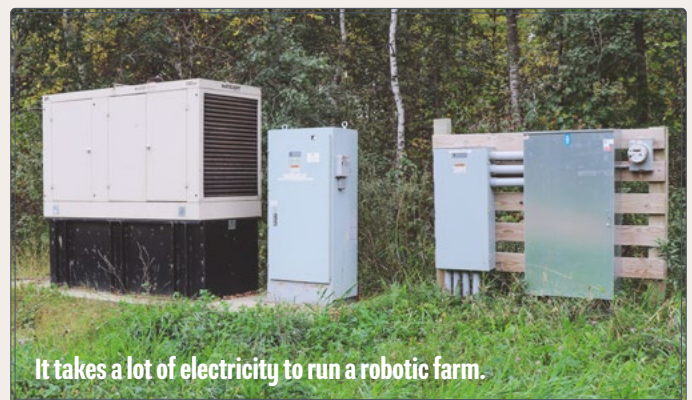
“We’re at 2.6 milkings per day right now,” he continues. “The cows are even being milked all night while we’re sleeping.”



A cow pokes her head out for a photo as she enters the robotic milker.

“We bought the farm in 2008 with 30 cows,” Vetsch reports. “Now we have 260 cows.” Of those 260 cows, 184 are now milked with the robotic milker. This translates into 14,200 pounds of milk collected through the use of the robotic milker each day. With Vetsch Farms producing 18,000 total pounds of milk each day, the robotic milker is responsible for collecting the majority of the milk they produce. This milk is then sold to First District Association dairy cooperative.

Vetsch Farms first started using its robotic milker on June 20th this past summer. Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC) played a role in helping make the new technology more affordable for the farm. After reading about rebates in the cooperative’s *Pine to Prairie* newsletter, Vetsch contacted TWEC to learn more about how his farm might benefit from the rebates currently available. Vetsch Farms was able to take advantage of a \$5,000 rebate per robotic stall.



It takes a lot of electricity to run a robotic farm.

“Todd-Wadena is proud to offer incentives to help our farm and business members save money on equipment, energy efficient motors, fans, drives, and more. These rebates, along with all our other rebates, are reimbursed by Great River Energy,” says Allison Frederickson, TWEC Member & Energy Services Manager. “Give us a call if you are upgrading or purchasing any electric equipment to see if there is a rebate that could benefit you.”

2024 Vegetation Management

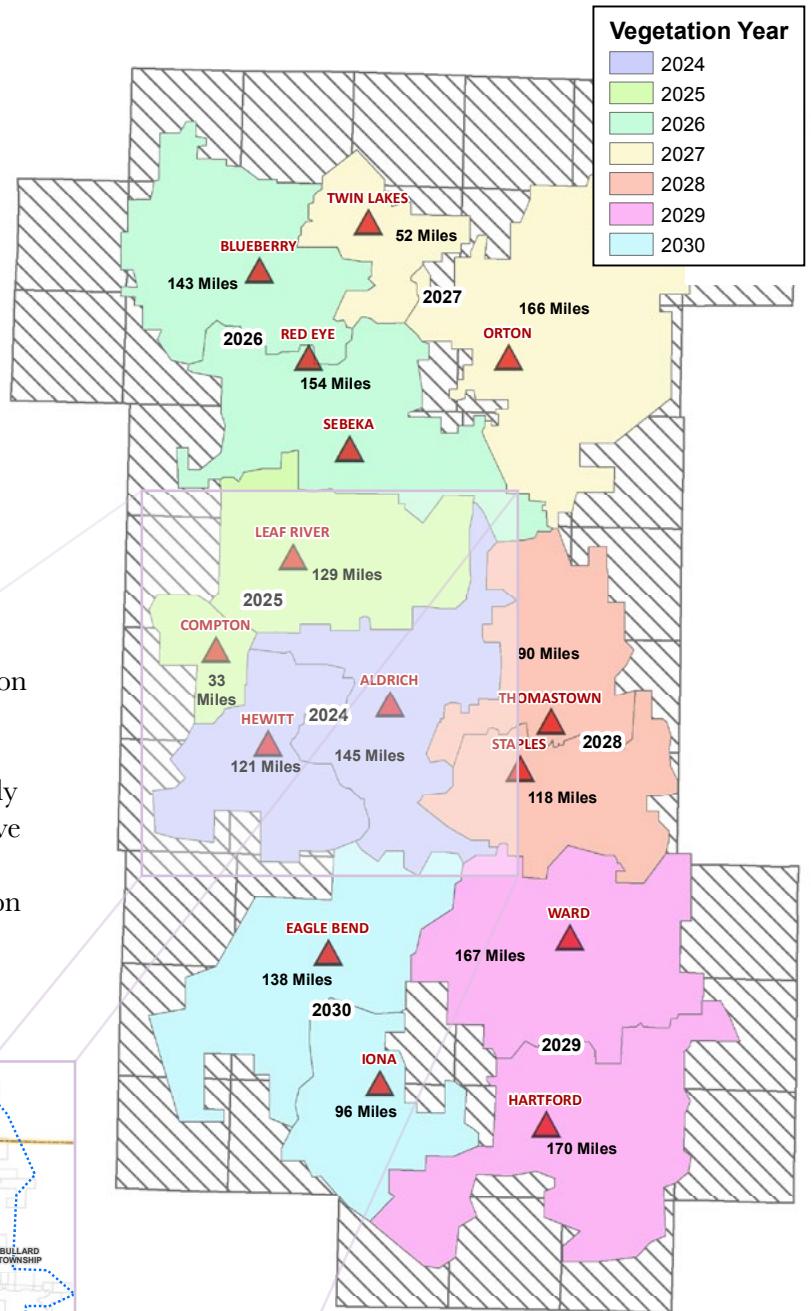


By Tyler Fisher,
Operations Manager

Vegetation management is vital to the safe and reliable operation of the electrical distribution system at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative.

What does this mean for property owners and our members? In order to deliver your electricity in the safest, most reliable, and most cost-effective way, we must work together to keep vegetation growing near power lines trimmed so as to minimize outages and maintain safe clearances.

In 2024, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, along with Carr's Tree Service, will be performing vegetation management in the Bertha, Hewitt, Verndale, and Wadena areas. Property owners in these areas were mailed a 'Notice of Vegetation Management' letter in early December 2023. A representative from the cooperative will be sent out to visually inspect overhead power lines and determine where and what type of vegetation management activity is required. Then, a crew from either Todd-Wadena or Carr's Tree Service will be scheduled to complete the work.



NOTE: If you are outside of the Bertha, Hewitt, Verndale, and Wadena areas, but notice a tree growing up into the lines or touching the lines—please give us a call. We will inspect the tree and the area surrounding it. With your help, we can help mitigate outages caused by vegetation growth. Thank you for your help!

Our Offices Will Be Closed:

- **Friday, December 22nd**
for Christmas Eve Holiday
Observed
- **Monday, December 25th**
for Christmas Day
- **Monday, January 1st** for
New Years Day
- **Monday,**
January 15th for
Martin Luther King
Jr. Day



Use Your Space Heater 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.

To estimate 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 kWh usage we used the following 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 11.672¢ rate per kilowatt-hour, we found it costs 19.8¢ per hour to run our heater on high.

DAILY	$(1,500 \text{ watts}/1,000) \times 24 \text{ hours a day} \times 11.672\text{¢ per kWh} = $ \$4.75
MONTHLY	$\$4.75 \times 30 \text{ days} = $ \$142.50

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 *11.672¢* per kilowatt-hour costs *\$4.75* per day to operate. And if you run it for 30 days, that would add **\$142.50** to your monthly bill!



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Get smart with a better way to heat and cool your home! Smart thermostats are Wi-Fi enabled and automatically adjust heating and cooling temperature settings in your home for optimal performance. Smart thermostats learn your temperature preferences and establish a schedule that adjusts to energy-saving settings when you're asleep or away. For maximum energy savings, look for smart thermostat models with the ENERGY STAR® label. **NOTE: TWEC offers a \$25 rebate on Wi-Fi smart thermostats!**

Source:
www.energy.gov



Operation Round Up Application Deadline

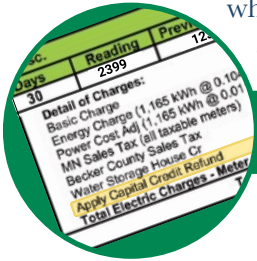
Make sure your organization applies for an Operation Round Up grant by the deadline of **January 15th**!

For more details and a fillable application, visit our website at www.toddwadena.coop



Look for Your Capital Credits on Your Bill

Members who had active accounts in 2008 and/or in 1993-96 should look for their capital credit retirement, which appears as an energy credit on billing statements this month. In 2023, we retired a total of \$1,051,000 in capital credits. Of that amount, \$754,000 is from TWEC to members who were active in 2008; and \$297,000 is from Great River Energy (our wholesale energy provider) to TWEC members who were active from 1993-1996.



Active members: your capital credits are applied to your account as an **energy credit** on your December bill.

APPLY FOR A TRIP OF A LIFETIME



JUNE 18 TO 23, 2024

AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

WHAT IS YOUTH TOUR?

- An all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., paid for by Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative.
- A week of visiting historic monuments, touring world class museums and meeting elected officials.
- A chance to develop life-long friendships with delegates from across the country!

HOW TO APPLY

- Applicants must be a sophomore or junior in high school.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative.
- The deadline is **February 1st, 2024.**

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

2024 Scholarships

This year, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is offering up to four \$1,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors, and up to two \$1,000 scholarships to adult students. Scholarship applications must be postmarked by **February 9th, 2024**. Scholarships are made available with unclaimed capital credits. After a period of seven years, Minnesota law allows cooperatives to use unclaimed capital credits for charitable or educational purposes.

Visit www.toddwadena.coop for more information.

Graduating Senior Scholarship

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative will award up to **four** \$1,000 scholarships to local 2024 graduating seniors for their first year as a (freshman) college student.

Power Up Adult Student Scholarship

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



Interested in Being a Director?

TWEC’s Board of Directors is essential to the success of the co-op. Directors attend monthly meetings to discuss issues and make decisions on behalf of the members. They attend conferences and read many reports/papers to understand the policies for which they are responsible and the issues with which they grapple.

Their responsibilities include mitigating risk, setting rates, understanding power supply, strategic planning, financial decision making, promoting the cooperative business model, gaining insights on political and environmental impacts, and meeting member expectations. If you are interested in becoming a director candidate, please contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee listed to the right.



2024 Nominating Committee

Name	City	Phone Number
Jerome Miller	Sebeka	(218) 837-5690
Gary Stracek	Browerville	(320) 594-2960
Wally Wiese	Verndale	(218) 639-6348
Ray Gildow	Staples	(218) 821-8848
Annette Adamietz	Verndale	(218) 445-5190
Erich Heppner	Staples	(952) 807-3279
Samantha Krause	Staples	(507) 766-0238
Heather Gilreath	Sebeka	(218) 841-0309



Members interested in becoming a director candidate may also contact the Cooperative office at (218) 631-3120 or (800) 321-8932 or at kvandeventer@toddwadana.coop.



To become a nominee for Director you must:

- Be a member in good standing of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative.
- Have your 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.

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



Todd-Wadena
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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:

Mark Thoma (320) 309-9483

Wadena County:

Brandon Disselbrett (218) 640-0187

District 5 (Todd County):

Mark Hunter (320) 616-5574

District 6 (Wadena County):

Sheldon Monson (218) 689-3260

If your electric power goes out:

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

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

Before digging call:

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

Find us on  

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

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 431

Wadena, MN 56482

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December Reader's Contest

1. The operations crew built _____ new services – including overhead, underground, irrigation, and 3-phase.
2. Scholarships are made available with _____ capital credits.
3. If you are interested in becoming a _____ candidate, please contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee.



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 with the subject line "Reader's Contest". Be sure to include your name and TWEC service address. Entries must be received by December 25th.

Roger Motzko of Browerville was the winner of our November Reader's Contest.



Todd-Wadena crews help hang Christmas lights at Burlington Northern Park in Wadena.