



## Director Kristine Spadgenske Receives Credentials in Today's Electric Utility Competencies

Kristine Spadgenske, Board Member of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC) Board of Directors, recently received the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors—requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills, and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. TWEC has a commitment to work through NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of our electric cooperative member-owners.

**Kristine Spadgenske**  
Director



The NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses:

- *Director Duties and Liabilities*
- *Understanding the Electric Business*
- *Board Operations and Process*
- *Strategic Planning*
- *Financial Decision Making*

**Congratulations Kristine on your achievement!**



**Miles Kuschel**  
Chair

## 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 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The meeting will be held at *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 two 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 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Mailed and electronic ballots will be counted as a vote if properly received by 9:00 a.m. CST on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The Nominating Committee selected the following nominees whose names will appear on the ballot for terms expiring in 2025: *Mike Thorson, Marie Katterhagen, and Judy Richer.*
3. Any other business to properly come before this meeting.

**Marie Katterhagen, Secretary**



### Democratic Member Control

When you purchase electricity from Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, you are receiving more than just energy to power your home or business. Because we are a cooperative, you're not just a customer, you are a member. As a member, you have a voice and a vote to help guide the direction of the cooperative.

Democratic Member Control is one of the seven Cooperative Principles that inform the way we conduct our business. In addition to voting on important matters pertaining to the cooperative, Todd-Wadena's members are responsible for electing the cooperative's Board of Directors. Directors, in turn, set policies and make decisions regarding the cooperative. These elected representatives are accountable to the membership.

The process for electing directors begins with Todd-Wadena's Nominating Committee. This group is responsible for identifying prospective candidates for open director seats. TWEC's Bylaws allow for 11 members on the Nominating Committee. To best serve our membership, we would like the committee to be at full capacity. If you are interested in serving on the Nominating Committee, or running for a director seat, please contact the cooperative to learn more.

I encourage all of our members to actively take part in the democratic process by casting a vote for this year's director candidates. Voting will take place at TWEC's Annual Meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup>, and also ahead of the Annual Meeting by mailing in ballots or voting online.

Traditionally, Todd-Wadena has a comparatively high percentage of members who participate in the voting process. In 2020, we achieved a 24 percent return rate! Our participation percentage dipped a little last year, with 17 percent of ballots returned.

While I am overall pleased with the participation at TWEC, I would still like to see more members voting and taking part in the democratic process, especially as we return again to an in-person Annual Meeting format. I invite all of our members to plan to attend this year's Annual Meeting, cast your vote, and learn more about your cooperative.



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

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

### Highlights from the January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, regular board meeting:

- CEO Dan Carlisle reviewed the final numbers for TWEC's headquarters project. The project officially closed with the 2021 year-end financials.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the December and 2021 year-end preliminary financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 1 percent over budget. Energy revenue was 7 percent under budget. December's purchased power expense was 16 percent under budget. Tier is 2.59 and Equity is 42.71.
- The board approved the 2021 Year-End Inventory Adjustment as presented.
- Member and Energy Services Manager Allison Uselman shared results from the Touchstone Energy National Survey that involved 14,300 members and 60 cooperatives across 16 states.
- TWEC's Nominating Committee met in January.
- Operations Manager Todd Miller recapped some highlights from the year-end statistics and provided an update on the Leaf River Substation rebuild.
- Board Member Mike Thorson gave the Great River Energy (GRE) December and year-end financial report. December was another strong month for GRE, with margins coming in ahead of budget.
- The board approved a motion to vote in favor of the resolution presented for the GRE Special Meeting on February 9, 2022, with Thorson authorized to act on behalf of TWEC.
- STAR Energy will celebrate its 25th Anniversary and host its Annual Meeting this August.
- Board Chair Miles Kuschel provided a legislative update: Project Tundra was approved by North Dakota regulators; the Supreme Court blocked the vaccine mandate; the USDA launched a \$10 million energy pilot program; companies continue to develop battery options; and EV bus funding has been made available.



## 2022 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.

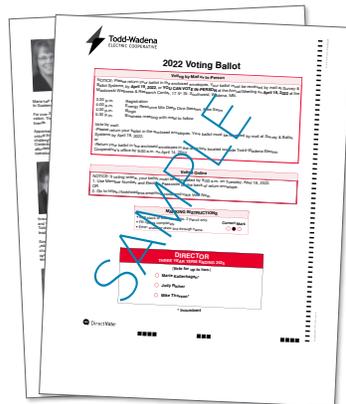


### 1 Vote by Mail or Drop Box

Election ballots are scheduled to be mailed to all Todd-Wadena members March 15<sup>th</sup>. The ballots will look like the sample below. 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.

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 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**Additionally, members may drop off their ballot in the appropriate envelopes in the Co-op's drop box by 9:00 a.m. on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022.**

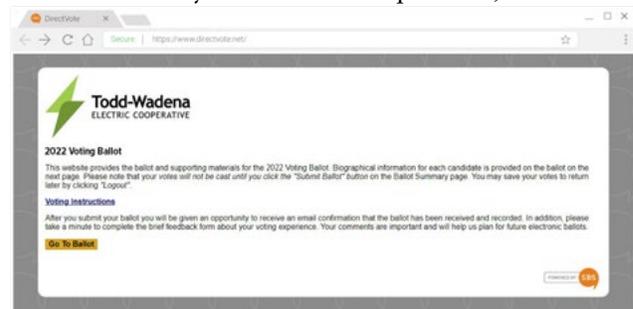


#### NOTICE CONCERNING MAILING ENVELOPES

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.**

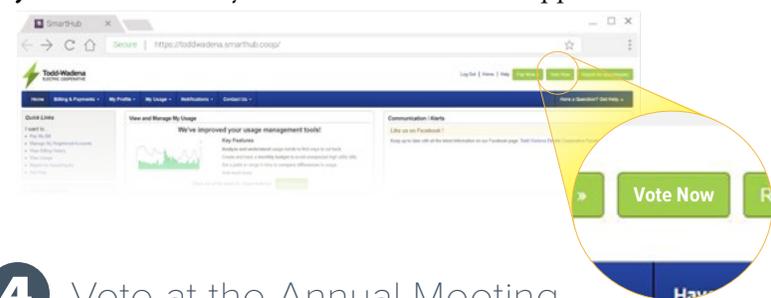
### 2 Vote Online via DirectVote

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 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022.



### 3 Vote Online via SmartHub

Log into your SmartHub account and look for the "Vote Now" button in the upper right corner. Follow the instructions to finish casting your vote. **New this year**—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 19<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.

## Marie Katterhagen

Marie and her husband, Dale, live on a farm north-east of Browerville. They have two grown sons and five grandchildren.

After graduating from St. Cloud School of Nursing as a Registered Nurse, Marie was employed at CentraCare Health-Long Prairie since 1976, and was the hospital's manager of Surgical Services for 30 years. After dedicating 45 years to her nursing career, she has retired to working casually.



After dairy farming for 30 years, the Katterhagens now raise feeder cattle up to finished weight. They also grow corn, soybeans, and hay.

Marie is active in her church, serving in the past on the Christ the King School Board, the Home and School Association, and the St. Cloud Diocesan Council. She has been a religious education instructor and currently serves as an Eucharistic Minister.

Marie has volunteered for Project Heal, an outreach clinic for the underserved in health care in Central Minnesota. She has made nine surgical missions to Guatemala, assisting with surgeries for patients who do not have access to medical care.

For over 25 years, Dale and Marie continue to host Envirofest at their farm for all Todd County 6<sup>th</sup> graders, where they learn about all areas of conservation. They hosted Todd County's Breakfast on the Farm in 2016. Marie enjoys grand-parenting, reading, quilting, and spending time with family and friends.

Appointed to fill a vacancy on the Todd-Wadena Board in 2007, she currently serves as secretary of the Board of Directors. "Now more than ever, it is critical that the members are represented by knowledgeable, committed leadership to work with legislators toward a balanced solution to our energy challenges," Marie said. "We need to continue to work with Great River Energy to keep our rates affordable and transmission reliable. Becoming a Credentialed Cooperative Director certainly confirmed my beliefs that this co-op provides excellent, reliable service to its members and strives to keep it affordable." Marie also said she appreciates the opportunity to bring diversity to the Board and believes she has gained a solid background in the operation of the industry and cooperative leadership.

## Michael Thorson

Mike and his wife, Eloise, are retired from their family farm located between Browerville and Staples. Their son, Erik, and his family have taken over their fruit and vegetable operation and continue to participate in several farmers' markets in Central Minnesota. Erik has a twin brother Karl. Mike and Eloise have six grandchildren from age 5 to 18. Mike likes to spend time with family, hunt, fish, read, and travel.

Mike served 14 years as the Chair of the Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative Board. He represents TWEC on the board of our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), where he also served as chair for several years. Mike has

represented GRE at the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives and ACES Power in Indiana.

Mike was born in Wadena, spent his early years in New York Mills, and then graduated from New London-Spicer High School. He graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Agricultural Economics. Mike has completed the Credentialed Cooperative Director, Board Leadership, and Director Gold programs offered through the National Rural Electric Association. He also completed the Blandin Leadership program.

Mike spent three years on active duty in the U.S. Army. He is involved in our community having served as a member of the Staples-Motley School Board, Todd

## Judy Richer

Judy Richer is a retired educator, having worked in the industry for over 40 years. She is a mother to her one son. She moved to Staples, MN 35 years ago to take a position as a special education teacher at the Staples-Motley High School. After teaching, she worked as a coordinator for Freshwater Education District and then for Central Lakes College as the Dean of Students. After she retired, she was active as a coordinator for the Bridges Academies and Workplace Connection Program in Region 5.



Judy is very active in her community. She serves as the Secretary for the Staples Historical Society, and Treasurer for the Staples-Motley Beyond Poverty organization. She is also involved in Food Insecurity, Community Connect, City Clean-Up, and Safety Over Suicide task groups, as well as a member of several church groups.

Judy believes that Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative not only provides essential services to its members, but also has a forward-thinking Board of Directors. She believes the Mission and Values of Todd-Wadena emphasize strong relationships and partnerships with local and regional businesses and provide a climate for community support which she feels are key to rural areas. In addition, she recognizes that Todd-Wadena has been innovative with its programs and services by designing energy efficient and affordable energy solutions. Todd-Wadena's leadership, employees, and Board members have demonstrated strength as a cooperative and, therefore, she would like to become more involved.

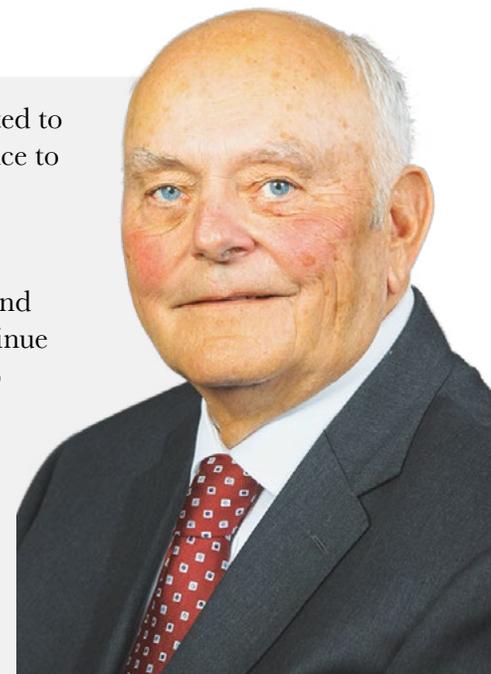
Some of the challenges that she foresees in the future for Todd-Wadena are infrastructure updates, conversion to more renewable energy, and the 30% reduction of carbon emissions by 2025. She believes that Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative must have a strong strategic plan to meet these challenges. She understands that the Board of Directors makes influential decisions that protect members' interests and impacts Todd-Wadena's operations and resources. She also understands that the Cooperative must work within the confines of Minnesota's policies and laws, while at the same time ensuring members' interests are met. If elected to the Board, she will work diligently to support Todd-Wadena in these efforts.

County Economic Development board, Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Association board, and was on the Cooperative Power board before it became Great River Energy. He is a member of Faith Lutheran Church, Minnesota Irrigators Association, and Farm Bureau.

"I work hard to keep up with the ever-changing energy industry where new technology is constantly being adopted and customer expectations continue to change. I try to balance my decisions on how to best keep TWEC competitive and reliable with a concern for the environment," Mike said. "TWEC rates are among the lowest of Great River Energy's cooperatives because TWEC members have been great participants in our load control programs. TWEC staff and employees are

experienced and dedicated to providing excellent service to all member-owners."

Mike believes that his education, experience, and common sense will continue to be important assets to TWEC as our system continues to grow and adapt to the needs of members, the changing regulatory system, and the environment.



## 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.

Dan Carlisle, TWEC's President/CEO, and Tyler Fisher 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)

## 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 *Orton, Thomastown, Aldrich, and Staples* substations. TWEC has contracted this service out to **Central Applicators**. Central Applicators will notify the 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.

LOOK FOR THIS LOGO IN THE MAIL



## Local Organizations Receive Grants

Giving back to the community we serve is a core cooperative principal. 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 four Operation Round Up grants to local non-profit organizations, totaling \$9,610.

Funds for the Operation Round Up program come from participating members of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative 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 \$569,000 to local organizations.

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	Local, nonprofit community groups may apply for Operation Round Up grants by calling the office at (800) 321-8932 or by downloading an application from our website at <a href="http://www.toddwadena.coop">www.toddwadena.coop</a> .
BIO Girls, Inc.	\$2,110	
Central Lakes College Food Pantry	\$2,000	
Ruby's Pantry	\$3,000	
Staples Motley Softball Booster Club	\$2,500	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,610</b>	

### Yard Light Rentals

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative rents LED yard lights to members for a flat monthly fee. The monthly light charge includes the rental of the light, plus all electricity used by the light. The Co-op will install the light at no cost to members and will maintain and service the light. In order to do so, the rental light must be installed on the meter pole or transformer pole, which is owned by the Cooperative.

*Todd-Wadena does not install yard light rentals on member-owned poles or buildings. Please contact the office if you have additional questions on the yard light rental program.*

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When streaming content, use the smallest device that makes sense for the number of people watching. Avoid streaming on game consoles, which use 10 times more power than streaming through a tablet or laptop.

Streaming content with electronic equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR® rating will use 25% to 30% less energy than standard equipment.

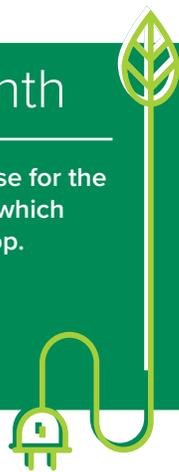
### Mission Statement // To be a trusted partner providing safe, reliable, and affordable energy options to our members.

### 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 is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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



# Pine to Prairie News

A monthly publication for  
members and friends of



**Todd-Wadena**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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

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

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

**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

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Good Friday • April 15<sup>th</sup> // Office closed.**

**Lineworkers Appreciation Day • April 11<sup>th</sup> // #ThankALineworker**  
**Annual Meeting • April 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. // See you there!**

## MARCH 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](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>.

1. The 2022 Annual Meeting will take place on Tuesday, April \_\_\_\_<sup>th</sup> at the Maslowski Wellness and Research Center in Wadena.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Applicators is the contracted service for Right-of-Way and Spraying.
3. Recently, the Community Trust Board met and awarded four Operation \_\_\_\_\_ Up grants, totaling \$9,610.

Name:

Your TWEC Account Number:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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**Aaron Yungbauer of Wadena was the winner of our February Reader's Contest.**