

## 2024 Annual Meeting a Success

The annual meeting is a time where the members of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative come together to announce the board election results, celebrate achievements, and listen to highlights on the state of the co-op from the Board Chair and CEO. Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC) celebrated the 2024 Annual Meeting at the Maslowski Wellness & Research Center on Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> in Wadena. A total of 287 members and their guests were in attendance for the meeting.

Allison Frederickson, Member and Energy Services manager, presented this year's Deep Dive session on Rooted in Agriculture. She highlighted grant and energy auditor opportunities for agriculture members, rebates, and more. Thirty-two members enjoyed free swim at the pool, and many members enjoyed Bingo prior to the meeting.



Shortly after the business meeting was called to order, members were served a delicious grilled chicken meal catered by the *Clarissa Ballroom*. TWEC recognized service awards for employees and highlighted that Director Mike Thorson is celebrating 50 years of service to the co-op.

Isabel Birkholtz, the 2023 Youth Tour representative, presented highlights of her trip to Washington, D.C. to the membership. All six recipients of the 2024 scholarships were in attendance and recognized on stage.

Board Chair, Miles Kuschel, highlighted one of the Co-op Principles: *Cooperation Among Cooperatives*. Kuschel gave a brief presentation about his trip to Zambia, Africa, with the National Rural Electric



*(2024 Annual Meeting continued on page 6)*

## Electric Safety Month

Electricity powers our modern world, fueling everything from our homes and businesses to our essential infrastructure. While it brings countless benefits, electricity also poses inherent risks if not handled safely. Electric cooperatives are proactive regarding electrical safety—prioritizing education, prevention, and responsive action to protect lives and livelihoods, not just during safety month but all year long.

At Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC), we understand that promoting electrical safety is not just about preventing accidents—it's about the safety of the communities we serve. Fostering a culture of safety permeates every aspect of our operations.

Education lies at the forefront of TWEC's approach to electrical safety. Through outreach programs, our newsletter, informational materials, and safety demonstrations, we seek to empower our members with the knowledge and tools needed to identify potential hazards and mitigate risks. Whether it's teaching children about the dangers of playing near power lines or educating homeowners on proper wiring practices, we work to equip individuals with the awareness and skills necessary to stay safe around electricity.

Prevention is another cornerstone of the cooperative's safety initiatives. TWEC regularly conducts inspections and maintains our infrastructure to identify and address potential hazards before they escalate into safety incidents. Whether it is trimming trees near power lines or upgrading aging equipment, these proactive measures enhance the reliability and safety of our electrical system.

Responsive action is crucial in ensuring the swift and effective resolution of safety concerns.

TWEC maintains robust emergency response protocols to address electrical hazards promptly and minimize the impact on the community.

Whether it's restoring power after a storm or responding to downed power lines, we mobilize our resources to safeguard lives and restore service as quickly as possible.

Collaboration is also key to the cooperative's approach to electrical safety. We work closely with local authorities, emergency responders, and community organizations to develop coordinated safety plans and response strategies. Recently, at the hotline school at M-State in Wadena, our lineworkers participated in a mayday training. This training included local law enforcement, first responders, medevac personnel, and others.

By fostering partnerships and sharing resources, we strengthen the collective resilience of the communities we serve and ensure a unified approach to safety preparedness and response.

Electrical safety is not just a priority for electric cooperatives—it's a fundamental commitment to protecting the well-being of the communities we serve. Through education, prevention, responsive action, and collaboration, we are working to foster a safer future for all.



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



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

## Move Over & Slow Down!

Minnesota legislation requires that drivers move over if possible, slow down, and continue to operate the vehicle at a reduced speed until safely past parked utility or emergency vehicles.

Safety starts with you.

**MAY IS ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH**



# TWEC Board Minutes

Highlights from the March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024, regular board meeting:

- CEO Dan Carlisle updated the board on the recent Member Managers Group meeting. Great River Energy (GRE) CEO David Saggau spoke about the impacts

and threats of wildfires to the electric industry. GRE is monitoring Minnesota's weather patterns and is cognizant of red flag warnings.

- Board Member Mike Thorson gave the GRE report, announcing that GRE's audit has been completed and received a clean report. GRE will be focusing its 2024 strategic planning session on rate designs, transmission, market portfolio, and growth strategies.

## Lineworker Safety Gear

Our lineworkers take safety seriously, suiting up with protective gear and equipment that helps to keep them safe and alive. Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative commits itself to the safety of its employees. Pictured is *Nate Bart* demonstrating the gear and tools our lineworkers use on a regular basis.

- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the February financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 18 percent under budget. Energy revenue was 13 percent under budget. February's purchased power expense was 16 percent under budget. Tier is 0.46 and Equity is 39.60.

- Matt Laughlin, Brady Martz joined the meeting to give the 2023 Auditor Report. He highlighted the new accounting standard Current Expected Credit Loss (CECL) that requires the cooperative to measure expected credit losses and adjust allowances accordingly.

- Operations Manager Tyler Fisher reported how vegetation management projects were started earlier than expected due to mild weather. Collectively, TWEC crews and contracted services already completed 16 miles of trimming. Spraying will commence this spring, with over 400 miles expected to be covered in the Bluffton, Sebeka, and Staples area.

- Board Chair Miles Kuschel provided a legislative update, discussing the status of active bills that may impact TWEC.

- Board Member Kristine Spadgen-ske was asked to testify on behalf of MREA and Minnesota cooperatives on the Governance bill.



**Hard Hat**

Head protection against scrapes, bumps, and electric shock.

**Safety Glasses**

Block bright sunlight and offer protection from rain, sleet, and debris.

**Shotgun Stick**

Insulated, dielectric-tested fiberglass tool for moving or adjusting live electrical equipment.

**Rubber Gloves**

Glove thickness dictates the level of voltage line personnel may work on.

**Safety Harness**

Full body harness for working in elevated bucket. Attaches to truck boom with lanyard and locking snap hook.

**Fire-resistant Clothing**

Required by law for electrical utility employees exposed to "incident heat energy." A voltage spike can cause an electrical arc flash. For a fraction of a second, these blasts may be hotter than the surface of the sun. These result in 77 percent of electrical injuries, and can severely burn unprotected skin.

**Work Boots**

Steel toe leather boots with extra arch support for climbing.

**MAY IS ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH**

Safety starts with you.

# Unlock Year-Round Efficiency for Home Heating & Cooling with a ccASHP

Are you looking for ways to cut your heating **and** cooling costs? If so, installing an energy-efficient air source heat pump could be the best choice for you.

Heat pumps function as both an air conditioner and heater. They use 72% less electricity than conventional air conditioners and furnaces by collecting and moving heat instead of generating it.

During the cooling season, heat pumps cool air by pulling heat from inside the conditioned space and pumping it outside. Alternatively, during the heating season, heat pumps pull heat from outside air — even when it's cold out — and pump it inside. Since heat pumps transfer heat rather than generate it, they are one of the most efficient means of cooling and heating your home.

While heat pumps are common in warmer climates, most people think these appliances will not work in places where temperatures

drop below freezing — but that is no longer true. When properly installed, many of today's cold-climate air source heat pumps (ccASHPs) can keep your home warm even during the coldest months of the year and use far less energy than other types of heating systems.

The key feature in a ccASHP is a variable-speed compressor, enabling a single heat pump to work efficiently and effectively. In addition, the variable-speed system holds a steadier temperature than a traditional single-speed heating or air conditioning system. There are both central-ducted systems and ductless systems of ccASHPs available. Central-ducted systems are designed and installed to meet the full heating and cooling needs of a home. Ductless systems deliver heat to a specific area of a home through a single interior head with no ductwork.

In cold-climate applications, ccASHPs typically require

a backup system to provide heat when cold outdoor air temperatures limit the heat pump capacity. Ducted systems typically use a propane/natural gas furnace as a backup. These backups take over the load of the system at an outdoor air temperature where the capacity of the heat pump is no longer sufficient. Homes with ductless systems typically rely on electric-resistance boards for backup heating.

According to Rewiring America, a nonprofit advocacy group, heat pumps can achieve more than 300% efficiency, while even the most efficient gas-powered furnaces fall short of 100% efficiency. It is common for homeowners who install an ASHP to save hundreds of dollars per year.

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative provides incentives for ASHPs throughout the year, but now is an especially great time to purchase an ASHP. Check out the promotion to the right!

## NEW! ASHP Rate

ASHPs are an incredibly efficient source of heating and cooling. In addition, they can be enrolled in our **dual fuel rate** which is less than half the cost of the general service rate. Heating with a cold climate ASHP can heat your home throughout most of the cold months in Minnesota (a backup heating system is required). Enrolling in TWEC's dual fuel rate just makes sense. You get efficient heating at a great rate and you never notice a hiccup in the heating of your home.

When an ASHP is enrolled in Dual Fuel, it also controls your cooling—which may have been a deterrent for some members. That all changes now! TWEC has developed a new rate: **Dual Fuel without AC Control**—specifically for ASHPs. When you enroll in this rate, TWEC will control your system in the winter months and not at all in the summer months (June, July, and August). You will receive the dual fuel rate during winter months and it will automatically shift to the general service rate in the summer. Now you can have the best of both worlds with your ASHP.

**If you are interested in enrolling in this rate, give us a call!**

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

Limited time!  
Promotion ends  
July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

# ASHP Rebates

Ducted Air Source Heat Pump	Regular Rebate	Promo Rebate
≥ 7.5 HSPF2*	\$500	<b>\$800</b>
≥ 8.1 HSPF2*	\$700	<b>\$1,000</b>

Rebate amounts and programs are subject to change without notice. **Promotion runs May 1<sup>st</sup>-July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.**

Ductless/Mini Split Air Source Heat Pump	Regular Rebate	Promo Rebate
≥ 7.5 HSPF2**	\$300	<b>\$500</b>

\*Ducted Air Source Heat Pump must be installed by a quality installer to qualify for TWEC rebate. A list of QI installers can be found at [www.toddwadena.coop](http://www.toddwadena.coop). \*\* Must be Energy Star rated.

## Things to Consider When Buying a House

By Kallie Baxter, Marketing & Communications Specialist

Buying a house is exciting and yet also stressful. Buyers usually have a list of “must-haves” such as an attached garage, a dishwasher, outdoor shed, deck, etc. It’s great to have a list of what you like and what you do not like. But a lot of times, home buyers are not always thinking about the energy efficiency of the home they are purchasing. If you are looking to purchase a home, the following are some questions to ask and consider during the process:



- 1) How will you heat your potential new home? Is it electric baseboard, natural gas, fuel oil, propane, etc.? How old is the system? Will you need to update it in the next year—if so, price out how much that may cost you. Do you need to switch to a different heating system?
- 2) Is the current property on any heating/cooling programs with their utility provider? Does it require a backup system?
- 3) Is there a central air conditioning unit or an air source heat pump? Is it enrolled in a load management program through the utility provider?
- 4) What type of water heater does the home have—electric or gas? How old is it? If it's an electric water heater, is it enrolled in a load management program like TWEC's peak shave or Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) program through the electric utility?
- 5) How old is the electrical system? Is it up to code?
- 6) What is the insulation like—is it well insulated or will you need to add insulation to help during the cold months?
- 7) Windows—how old are they? Are they in working order? Do they seem to leak cold air?

As a buyer you can forgo a home inspection, but the inspection technician will look at the electrical, plumbing, insulation, and structural components of the home. Having an inspection completed on your future home is important for determining if there are any issues with the house that could cost you additional money down the road.

You can ask the realtor to have the homeowners release their utility bills if they choose to. However, it is important to know that everyone’s usage and lifestyle is different. Some people like to keep their home at 75 degrees in the

winter and others may keep it at 68 degrees all winter long. Even though you may be able to see a snapshot of energy use on their utility bill, you do not know the lifestyle of the homeowners.

You may not like the wall color in your new home, but that is much more affordable to change than changing out a new HVAC system, adding in insulation, or updating your electrical system. These are just a few tips and questions to ask when you are looking to purchase your next home. 🏡

## 2024 Annual Meeting *(continued from page 1)*

Cooperative Association to help establish Zambia's first electric cooperative. Kuschel also highlighted how the co-op is working tirelessly with legislators and regulators to make sure they are educated on how the bills that they make affect rural Minnesota and our members. The co-op is working with officials towards lifting the nuclear moratorium to explore the benefits of small modular reactor technology, and working with new battery compositions to store electricity from renewables, while trying to block mandates that continue to drive the price of electricity skyward.

Dan Carlisle, TWEC president/CEO, gave highlights from the Finance, Member & Energy Services, and Operations departments.

Carlisle gave a recap of the co-op's rate classes, with residential coming in first accounting for 64% of the co-op's revenue. TWEC, along with Great River Energy patronage, retired over 1 million dollars in 2023. In 2023, the

co-op installed 112 new services, constructed over 12 miles of new lines, rebuilt 6.5 miles of overhead, and completed 287 pole change outs. The Member & Energy Services department hosted several events throughout the year, and educated over 450 students with safety and state of electricity presentations in our local schools. Over \$35,000 was awarded to 20 local organizations through Operation Round Up grants.



In his CEO report, Carlisle presented on cyber security and what practices and trainings the co-op employees are doing in order to safeguard our system. The co-op created a wildfire mitigation policy, which was driven by recent

wildfires out West. Lastly, Carlisle presented on the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) report which highlights some of the unheralded things the co-op does such as recycle oil and batteries, its commitment to communities, and the co-op's robust rebate and load management programs. It also highlights the continuing education for not only employees, but board directors, and the work the board does to help advocate for co-ops in St. Paul and Washington, D.C. All members received an ESG report with their attendance gift.

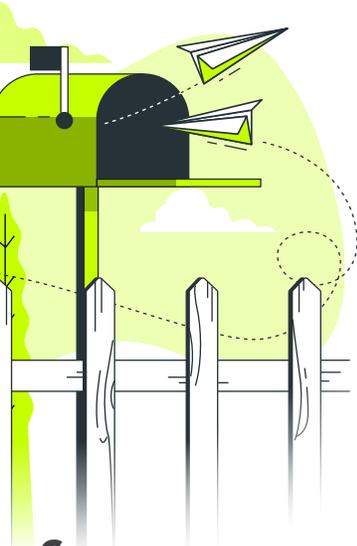
The 2024 Nominating Committee Chair Wally Wiese was invited to the stage to announce the election results for (2)

three-year terms: *Tom Brichacek*, 857 votes; *Gary Kneisl*, 625 votes; *Miles Kuschel*, 1,032 votes. A total of 1,472 ballots were cast in the 2024 director election either by mail, online, or in-person at the annual meeting.

## Can You Help Us Locate These Former Members?

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is trying to locate these former co-op members to reunite them with their unclaimed capital credits. Their capital credit checks were returned last year — *address unknown*. These former co-op members have either moved or passed away and we no longer have their current address or estate address. If you know anyone on this list, please have them call our office and provide us with a new address.

- Bunkowski, Tony E • Sebeka, MN
- Cully, Eric M & Cully, Jessie A • Bluffton, MN
- Denny, Gregory A & Denny, Virginia M • Wadena, MN
- Gilbert, Virgil D • Arcola, IL
- Hilden, Robert C • Osage, MN
- Lovlace, Leatte • White Bear Township, MN
- Mueller, Evan W • Mountain House, CA
- Oldenburg, Jeffrey M & Oldenburg, Dawn • Granbury, TX
- Salber, Robert J • Randall, MN
- Sandry, Ben • Browerville, MN
- Smith, Kristie L • Jacksonville, FL
- Smith, Todd E • Hopkins, MN
- Sullivan, James T • Verndale, MN
- Sunday, Trena • Sutherland, IA
- Tangen, Wayne A • Miltona, MN
- Zercom Corporation • Merrifield, MN



# Dates to Remember

- **Operation Round Up Applications Due**  
Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>
- **Memorial Day: Office Closed**  
Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup>
- **Office Closed**  
Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup>

## 2024 Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to our 2024 **high school** and **adult** scholarship recipients! Each will receive \$1,000 to be used towards the 2024-2025 school year!



**Macey Goeden**, Wadena-Deer Creek High School • *Daughter of Kevin and Gail Goeden* • Plans to attend North Dakota State University and major in Radiological Sciences



**Kelanie Oldakowski**, Wadena-Deer Creek High School • *Daughter of Greg and Anne Oldakowski* • Plans to attend University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and major in Biology



**Gaberial Koval**, Staples-Motley High School • *Son of Linus and Sherri Koval* • Plans to attend MN State Community and Technical College in Wadena for the Electrical Technician program



**Carson Trantina**, Staples-Motley High School • *Son of Mark and Sara Trantina* • Plans to attend MN State Community and Technical College in Wadena for the Electrical Line Worker program



**Addisyn Cichos**, Staples-Motley High School • *Daughter of Jef and Rhonda Cichos* • Plans to attend the University of North Dakota for Pre-Occupational Therapy



**Amanda Richter**, Wadena • *Grand Canyon University* • Master of Education in Elementary and Special Education

# Pine to Prairie News

A monthly publication for members & friends of



**Todd-Wadena**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Monday - Friday

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## **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) 580-8614

**District 5 (Todd County):**

Mark Hunter (320) 616-5574

**District 6 (Wadena County):**

Lowell Bradbury (218) 349-0068

### **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

Printed on recycled paper.

PRSR STD  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**  
DPC

## Summer Office Hours



Our summer office hours will be 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, starting Memorial Day and going through Labor Day.

## May 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 May 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Justin Kern of Verndale was the winner of our April Reader's Contest.**

1. We've pumped up the rebates on ducted and ductless \_\_\_\_\_ this summer!

2. May is \_\_\_\_\_ Safety Month.

3. Summer office hours will be \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ p.m., Monday through Friday starting Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Name:

Your TWEC Account Number:

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