



Todd-Wadena
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Pine to Prairie

July 2024

www.toddwadena.coop

Area Organizations Receive Grants

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's Community Trust Board met in early June to review the latest Operation Round Up applications. Of the 13 applications submitted, nine organizations received funding totaling \$13,503.49.



Organization		Amount
City of Bluffton	Park Fund	\$1,800.00
Menahga Police	Squad Car Computers	\$5,000.00
Sebekka "Little Trojans" Preschool	Playground for Courtyard	\$1,800.00
United Way of Douglas and Pope Counties	Long Prairie Backpack Attack	\$603.49
Wadena Knights of Columbus Council 2107	Coats for Kids	\$800.00
Old Wadena Society	Blue Bird House Building	\$500.00
MAHUBE-OTWA Community Action Partnership	Wadena County Back to School Supplies	\$1,000.00
Knob Hill Sportsman Club	Firearm Safety Props	\$1,500.00
Wadena County Friendly Rider	Summer Recreation/Activity Free Rides	\$500.00
Total		\$13,503.49

Community Trust Board Members (L to R):

Bruce Curley, Kristine Hendrickson, Peter Fink, Russell Kleinschmidt, Heidi Huotari, Sarah Gregerson, Nancy Benson



GET INVOLVED!

Your *small change* makes a *BIG DIFFERENCE* to local organizations that serve the communities we live and work in. For less than \$1 a month, you can help make a difference in our local communities by rounding your electric bill up to the nearest dollar!

If you'd like to join the Operation Round Up program by "rounding up" your electric bill, please contact the office at (218) 631-3120 or scan the QR code to the right and fill out the form.



If you are a part of a local community group or organization that is in need of funding for a project, we encourage you to fill out an Operation Round Up grant application. Application deadlines are September 15th, January 15th, and May 15th.

AI & Democratic Elections

In an era of rapid technological advancement, we are witnessing significant transformations in how we access information and engage with civic processes. One such innovation is the widespread use of chatbots and AI-driven assistants. While these tools offer convenience and efficiency, they also pose significant risks, particularly when it comes to civic processes and elections. As your electric cooperative CEO, I feel it is my duty to raise awareness about the potential dangers of blindly trusting chatbot responses in these critical areas.

Chatbots, powered by artificial intelligence (AI), have become ubiquitous in our daily lives. They can answer questions, provide recommendations, and assist with a myriad of tasks. However, their rapid adoption comes with a caveat: the information they provide is only as reliable as the data they are trained on and the algorithms that power them. This is particularly concerning when it comes to civic processes and elections, where misinformation can have serious consequences.

The Risks of Misinformation

1. **Inaccurate Information:** Chatbots can sometimes provide incorrect or outdated information. In the context of elections, this could mean misinforming voters about registration deadlines, polling locations, or ballot procedures.
2. **Bias and Manipulation:** AI systems can inadvertently reflect biases present in their training data. Worse, they can be intentionally manipulated by malicious actors to spread disinformation and influence voter behavior.
3. **Lack of Accountability:** Unlike human sources, chatbots lack accountability. There is no straightforward way to hold them responsible for disseminating false or misleading information.

As an electric cooperative, our mission extends beyond providing reliable energy; we are committed

to empowering and educating our members. Trustworthy information is the cornerstone of a healthy democracy, and our community's ability to make informed decisions is paramount. We must recognize the benefits of AI but also the limitations and the potential dangers of blindly accepting chatbot responses as fact.



Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO & General Counsel

How We Can Safeguard Our Information

1. **Critical Thinking:** Encourage critical thinking and skepticism. Remember to verify information from multiple sources before accepting it as true, especially when it pertains to civic matters.
2. **Reliable Sources:** When looking for election-related information, try to only use official government websites and reputable news organizations.
3. **Advocate for AI Transparency:** Todd-Wadena will continue to support initiatives and policies that promote transparency in AI development and usage. This includes advocating for clear disclosure of how chatbot responses are generated and ensuring mechanisms are in place to correct misinformation.

While AI and chatbots offer numerous benefits, it is crucial that we approach them with a healthy dose of skepticism, particularly when it comes to civic processes and elections. By raising awareness and promoting critical thinking within our community, we can help ensure that our members are well-informed and prepared to participate in our democracy with confidence.

As your electric cooperative, we are committed to your empowerment and education. Let us work together to navigate this new technological landscape responsibly and safeguard the integrity of our democratic processes.

Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO & General Counsel



Co-op Strong Drive-Through Lunch

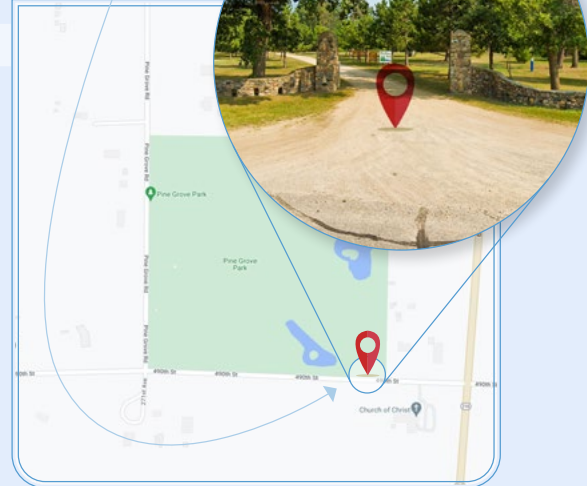
WEDNESDAY
JULY 24

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative and West Central Telephone Association are teaming up for the **7th Annual Co-op Strong Member Appreciation Lunch**. The drive-through lunch will take place on Wednesday, July 24th at Pine Grove Park in Staples from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

We will be serving lunch from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Pine Grove Park in Staples • 1012 Pine Grove Road, Staples, MN 56479

TODD-WADENA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WEST CENTRAL TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION

Note: Please use the **south entrance** located on 490th Street.



2024 MEMBER APPRECIATION

Pancake Supper



Date	Tuesday, August 20 th
Time	4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Location	TWEC Headquarters
Food	Pancakes & Sausage

Join us for our annual member appreciation *Pancake Supper* on Tuesday, August 20th from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative headquarters.

- ✓ Bounce House & Kids Activities
- ✓ Electrical Safety Demonstrations



Our 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

Safety Events at Todd-Wadena

Our employees recently participated in a *First Aid/CPR refresher* class hosted by Star Energy Services. All of our employees are First Aid, CPR, and AED trained. Additionally, our lineworkers had their annual *pole top rescue and bucket training*. This training provides our linemen with the opportunity to learn and practice methods of rigging and rescuing an injured or incapacitated lineworker in an emergency situation from a pole or an aerial bucket. We also performed *safety demonstrations* at the Wadena and Todd county fairs with instruction on how to be safe around electricity.



Submit Photos for Our 2025 Calendar

We are now open to receive photo submissions from members for the cooperative's 2025 calendar. Submit your digital photos (up to 5 per membership) at www.toddwadena.coop/2025-calendar by September 15th, 2024. Be sure to send the photographer's name, TWEC service address, and phone number with the photo.

We are looking for scenic photos (wildlife or landscape) that represent the four seasons of Minnesota. From the entries received, we'll select 13 photos — one for each month of the year plus one for the cover. Members whose photos are included in the calendar will receive a \$20 credit on their TWEC account (*must have an active TWEC account to participate*).

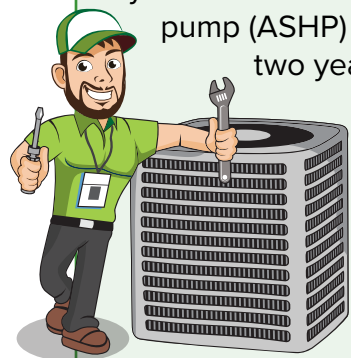
Guidelines for Contest

- Only active Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative members may enter the contest.
- Photos must be scenically capturing the beauty of Minnesota's four seasons.
- Photos must not include people.
- One membership (household) may submit up to 5 photos. If there are multiple photographers per household, please fill out a form for each photographer.
- Only landscape (*horizontal*) orientation photos will be accepted. Vertical photos will not be accepted.
- Photos need to be sized for printing: 12 inches wide by 9 inches high. 300 dpi minimum quality.



Cooling System Tune-up Rebate

The best way to ensure efficient operation of your central air conditioner or air source heat pump (ASHP) is by having it tuned-up every two years. A tune-up by a service expert can improve your unit's efficiency by as much as 20 percent, extend its life, and help protect our environment. Todd-Wadena offers a \$25 rebate for central air conditioner and ASHP tune-ups!



Contact a local HVAC contractor and follow these steps to receive a \$25 rebate:

- 1) Hire the contractor (members qualify for a tune-up rebate every 2 years).
- 2) After completing the tune-up, have your contractor fill out the *contractor portion* of the **Cooling System Tune-Up** application at www.toddwadena.coop/services/rebates.
- 3) Then complete the *member portion*.
- 4) Return the coupon to Todd-Wadena, along with a copy of the contractor invoice, within 90 days of purchase.

Limited time!
Promotion ends
July 31st, 2024.

Stay **COOL** this
Summer with an ASHP!

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

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

Rebate amounts and programs are subject to change without notice. **Promotion runs May 1st-July 31st, 2024.** *Ducted Air Source Heat Pump must be installed by a Quality Installer to qualify for the TWEC rebate. A list of QI installers can be found at www.toddwadena.coop. **Must be Energy Star rated.

Unclaimed Capital Credits for Over Seven Years

Unclaimed capital credits go to the 2025 scholarship fund if not claimed. Please contact the office if your name is on this list.

Action Machine	Friesen, Howard J	Nelson, Roger N
Anderson, Jean M	Gerhardt, Gary P	Nelson, Rosina E
Beavers, Ra Geneia L	Godfrey, Ralph Estate	Nelson, Scott A
Beste, Walter A	Hagen, Keith A	Olson, Mark A
Bjorke, Mark D	Hahn, Sherry D	Ortiz, Robert D
Brown, Lloyd E	Harris, Dale L	OT Repair
Brown, Caroline M	Huff, Harold L	Perry, Pamela K
Cameron, Russell	Iverson, Lauren J	Puhr, Mark J
Carlson, Terry D	Jesinoski, Michael J	Rautio, Susan M
Chase, Thomas R	Johnson, Scott C	Ricker, Pearl M
Christensen, Scott P	Kaufman, Roy L	Rockwell, Janeane M
Christian, Cal P	Kopp, Jo Ann E	Sabourin, Robert H
Conovr-Wilson, Rita F	Kvamme, Darrell L	Sakkinen, Manuel R
Costner, Mari C	Larson, Hank L	Sawatzky, Loren R
Country Manor Motel	Lembke, Joyce L Estate	Schaefer, Brian R
Davis, Robert M	Leritz, Stephen C	Scholl, Sharon A
De Nittis, L.W.	Lewis, Randy L	Schwalbaugh, Susie A
Dechaine, Todd A	Madison, Irene L	Severson, Teresa J
Delfosse, Larry D	Manley, Dale W	Swank, David J
Engebretson, Olaf A	Mc Cumber, Shirley M	Taylor, Patti A
Erickson, Harvey V	Estate	Thompson, Constance G
Ferguson, Robert B	Mc Guire, Gloria L	Toepper, William Estate
Foley, Thomas H	Mickelson, Eric L	Wilson, Betty L
Forar, Lucille L	Mills, Angela M	Winter-Holm, Brent J
France, William L	Myren, Vince L	

Upcoming TWEC Events

- Co-op Strong Drive-Through Lunch**
 Wednesday, July 24th
 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 Pine Grove Park in Staples, MN
- Pancake Supper**
 Tuesday, August 20th
 4 to 6:30 p.m.
 TWEC Garage
- Meet the Candidates**
 Tuesday, September 10th
 6:30 p.m. Social // 7 p.m. Forum
 Verndale Lions Civic Center
 109 1st Ave. SE
 Verndale, MN 56481

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

Variable Budget Plan

If you're a member who uses more electricity in the winter than the summer, or vice-versa, TWEC's variable budget plan may be beneficial for you! The variable budget plan recalculates each month based on a rolling 12 months' usage. It accounts for fluctuation in weather and how you use electricity each month, but also helps avoid large spikes in your bill in the heating or cooling seasons.

This plan helps spread your electricity charges out more evenly over an entire year. If you use approximately the same amount of electricity year over year, your monthly bill should only vary by around \$10.00. If there are larger variances in electric use, your bill may vary more. A variable budget plan is a helpful tool for budgeting.

On your billing statement, you will still be able to view how much energy you consumed in the billing period. This amount may be more or less than the amount you pay for that month under this plan.

- Your account must be current with TWEC and you must be a TWEC member for at least 12 months at your current location.
- Members enrolled in the variable budget plan also have to be enrolled in AutoPay through their checking or savings account (ACH) or credit card.

If you are interested in enrolling in the variable budget plan, please contact our office at (800) 321-8932 to see if you are eligible to enroll.



Todd-Wadena
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

POWERING CONVENIENCE

Take the worry out of paying your electric bill on time when you enroll in **AutoPay!** Switch to AutoPay through ACH payments this summer and receive a one-time, \$10 energy credit.*

All ACH AutoPay enrollees will also be entered to win a \$50 gift card to a local business.

**New AutoPay ACH enrollment only.*

Promotion runs June 8th–August 6th, 2024.



All About Outages

Why do my neighbors have power and I don't?

This is one of the most asked questions after a large outage situation. The answer is more complicated than most think.

Storm damage and animals can affect main power lines that serve a large amount of members or individual circuits and equipment that just serve one member or a small amount of members. When your neighbor's lights come on before yours, our lineworkers may have made a repair to a main power line but the lines and equipment that feed your home may still need repairs.

It could also be that your neighbor's house is being powered by a personal generator. Your home could also have some internal electrical issues that need repair before power can be restored. Regardless of the cause of your outage, our crews will work hard to get your lights back on as soon and safely as they can.

What to do before calling in to report an outage:

- 1) Check your fuses and circuit breaker.
- 2) Call your neighbor(s) to see if their power is off.
- 3) Call Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative to report the outage. Have your account number and/or service location ready when you call. Members can now also report an outage on the SmartHub app!
- 4) Inform the dispatcher of any information about the cause of the power outage, if known, such as a tree on the line or line down, etc. This information will help our crews expedite power restoration.

Crews are on-call and ready to respond. Response time can vary depending on the number of outages being reported and their location in the field. Once crews arrive to the outage location, they will need to complete an investigation and work to make the necessary repairs for power restoration.

Outage Map & Notifications

Our outage map is always available at www.toddwadena.coop and will display any current outages. It is still important for members to report outages they are experiencing.

Members can also sign up to receive text message notifications of outages that concern their TWEC account. Visit www.toddwadena.coop/outages to get started. You will then be asked for your account number. Select either *Residential* or *Business* and fill in the requested information. You will now receive notifications of any outages that affect your account, as well as power restoration notices.

Scan the QR code to the right to watch a video on reporting an outage, and see TWEC's process for restoring power!



TWEC Board Minutes

Highlights from the May 30th, 2024, regular board meeting:

- CEO Dan Carlisle discussed the annual legal seminar he attended in Vermont. He highlighted a few case studies that were pertinent to Todd-Wadena.
- Board Member Mike Thorson gave the Great River Energy (GRE) report. Market pricing remains extremely low and April margins came in under budget.
- Jon Loeffen, CEO of West Central Telephone Association, joined the meeting to discuss legislative issues directly affecting the broadband industry. He also spoke about WCTA's initiatives and growth opportunities.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the April financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 10 percent under budget. Energy revenue was 7 percent under budget. April's purchased power expense was 5 percent under budget. Tier is 1.11 and Equity is 40.04.
- The 2023 fiscal year allocation of capital credits was approved (TWEC Allocation: \$754,405; GRE Allocation: \$651,424).
- Next year's annual meeting will be held on April 22, 2025, at the Maslowski Wellness Center in Wadena.
- Operations Manager Tyler Fisher reported how crews completed the 2024 stringing workplan projects and the line regulator inspection is also finished.
- Board Chair Miles Kuschel provided a legislative update reviewing bills that will have an impact on the cooperative.
- Al Withers was appointed to the Community Trust Board.

Pine to Prairie News

A monthly publication for members & friends of



Todd-Wadena
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (summer)
Monday - Friday

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(800) 321-8932

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Email: todd-wad@toddwadena.coop

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P.O. Box 431
Wadena, MN 56482

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Tom Brichacek, Vice Chair
Marie Katterhagen, Secretary
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Michael Thorson, Director
Gene Kern, Director
Kristine Spadgenske, Director

Daniel Carlisle, President/CEO &
General Counsel

LOCAL ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS

Todd County:

Mike Ramsdell (612) 246-8410

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
www.instagram.com/twec.coop

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 431

Wadena, MN 56482

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

Bernie Sabinash of Wadena was the winner of our June Reader's Contest.

1. Co-op Strong will take place on Wednesday, July 24th at Pine Grove Park in Staples. Please use the _____ entrance of the park.
2. The _____ budget plan recalculates each month based on a rolling 12 months' usage.
3. To report an outage, call or report an outage on the _____ Hub app.

Name:

Your TWEC Account Number:

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