Todd-Wadena
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Pine to Prairie
www.toddwadena.coop
March 2025

Come Celebrate 85 Years with Us!

Make plans to attend the Annual Meeting of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative as we celebrate 85 years! Our theme this year is ***Measuring Success: Powered by our Members***. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 22nd, 2025 at the Maslowski Wellness & Research Center *(17 5th St. SW, Wadena, MN).*

85 YEARS
1940-2025

SCHEDULE

3:30 p.m. Registration Opens
4:00 p.m. Deep Dive Session: Rates & Reliability
Free Swim
4:30 p.m. Bingo
5:30 p.m. Business meeting with meal

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 22nd, 2025. The meeting will be held at the *Maslowski Wellness and Research Center* at *17 5th 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 22nd, 2025. Mailed and electronic ballots will be counted as a vote if properly received by 8:00 a.m. CST on April 22nd, 2025. The Nominating Committee selected the following nominees whose names will appear on the ballot for terms expiring in 2028: *Alex Roth, Eugene Roller, Mike Thorson, Marie Katterhagen, Robb H Oyster,* and *Steven C Peterson.*
3. Any other business to properly come before this meeting.

Marie Katterhagen, *Secretary*

Legislative Priorities

Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO & General Counsel

As members of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, you are at the heart of everything we do. Our goal is to provide you with safe, reliable, and affordable electricity while adapting to the ever-changing energy landscape. In order to fulfill this mission, it is critical that we stay informed and take action on legislative priorities that impact our cooperative and its members.

Reforming Net Metering for Fairness and Sustainability

One of the key issues facing Minnesota's electric cooperatives is outdated net metering policies. Currently, state law requires utilities to purchase excess energy from residential solar installations at nearly double the wholesale rate. This results in a cost shift, where non-solar members effectively subsidize those who can afford to install solar panels.

Why Reform is Needed

- ***Changing Technology:*** Over the past decade, solar panel costs have dropped by 90%, and efficiency has increased by 300%. The net metering policy was originally designed to support a fledgling industry, but today, solar is thriving.
- ***Cost Equity:*** The current system disproportionately benefits higher-income households, while the majority of our members bear the financial burden.
- ***Grid Reliability:*** Overbuilding solar for profit, rather than for household use, puts unnecessary strain on our grid without delivering cost-effective carbon reductions.

Our cooperative supports reforms that encourage responsible solar growth – allowing members to install systems that meet their needs without shifting costs onto their neighbors. A balanced approach ensures fairness for all members while promoting renewable energy adoption.

Role of Nuclear Energy in a Carbon-Free Future

As Minnesota law pushes us toward carbon-free electricity, we must explore all available options. While wind and solar play crucial roles, they alone cannot provide the 24/7 reliability needed to power our homes and businesses. Nuclear energy remains the only large-scale, carbon-free baseload power source available today.

Why We Must Consider Nuclear Energy

- ***Efficiency:*** A single football field could store all the used nuclear fuel generated in the U.S. since the 1950s, and nuclear power has operated for decades without harming public health.
- ***Reliability:*** Unlike wind and solar, which depend on weather conditions, nuclear plants provide consistent energy generation.
- ***State Policy Barriers:*** Minnesota is the only state in the nation that bans new nuclear construction. We believe it is time to have real discussions about lifting this moratorium to allow for advanced nuclear technologies, such as small modular reactors, to be part of our energy future.

Protecting Rural Electric Cooperatives from Unnecessary Costs

Legislative mandates and property tax changes can significantly impact electric rates for cooperative members. The longstanding property tax exemption for essential utility infrastructure – such as streetlights and meters – has helped keep rural electric rates affordable. Removing these exemptions would disproportionately impact rural areas, where cooperatives serve fewer consumers per mile of line.

Similarly, local control over energy decisions is critical. Our locally elected board understands the unique needs of our community and is best equipped to make decisions that balance affordability, reliability, and sustainability. We oppose one-size-fits-all legislative mandates that undermine cooperative governance.

Our Commitment to You

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative is committed to advocating for policies that protect our members from unnecessary costs, ensure equitable energy solutions, and maintain a reliable grid. We will continue working with policymakers, industry leaders, and cooperative members to navigate these challenges together.

Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO & General Counsel

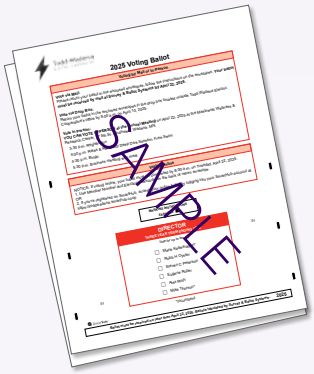
2025 Director Candidate Voting Options

Cooperatives are *democratic entities*, owned by those they serve and governed by elected representatives. In fact, one of the seven cooperative principles is *Democratic Member Control*. In order to underscore this principle, we offer multiple ways to cast your vote. This year you can vote for up to **two candidates**, who will each serve a three-year term ending in 2028.

1 VOTE BY MAIL OR DROP BOX

Election ballots are scheduled to be mailed to all Todd-Wadena members on March 17th. The ballots will look like the sample below. The order of candidate names will be rotated among ballots.

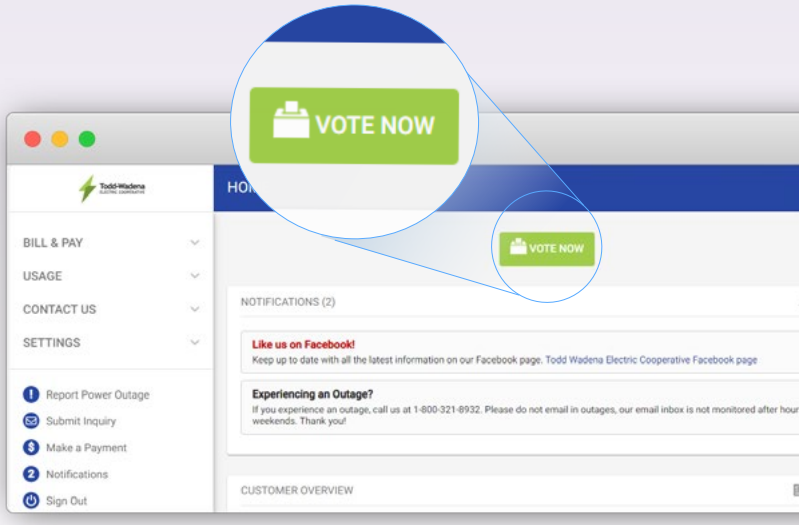
To vote by mail, complete your ballot, place ballot in secret envelope, and seal. Place secret ballot envelope in the white, pre-paid return envelope, and mail. The ballots will be mailed directly to our election company, SBS, to tabulate. **Your ballot must be received by April 22nd, 2025**.



OR Seal your completed ballot in the appropriate envelopes and place it in the drop box located outside of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's office by **9:00 a.m. on April 10th, 2025**.

NOTICE CONCERNING MAILING ENVELOPES

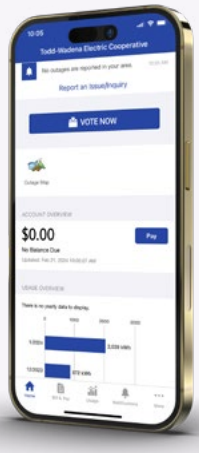
There are two envelopes to be returned with each ballot. One is the **pre-addressed, postage-paid** envelope, and the other is the **secret ballot envelope**. It is very important that the ballot is first placed into the secret ballot envelope, and then that envelope is placed into the pre-addressed 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

Online voting must be completed by 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 22nd, 2025.

There will be instructions with the ballot you receive in the mail on how you can vote online using **DirectVote**. You do **not** need a SmartHub account in order to vote this way. Once you've authenticated through the DirectVote page, follow the instructions to cast your vote.



OR If you're a registered user on **SmartHub**, access your online ballot by logging into SmartHub at ***toddwadena.smarthub.coop*** and click the *VOTE NOW* button, or open the SmartHub app and vote there.

3 VOTE IN-PERSON AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Vote in-person at the Annual Meeting on **Tuesday, April 22nd, 2025** at the *Maslowski Wellness & Research Center*. Registration opens at 3:30 p.m., with the business meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m. **Voting at the Annual Meeting will be done with an iPad at registration.**

Results of the balloting will be announced at the close of the Annual Meeting on April 22nd and printed in the May issue of *Pine to Prairie News*.

2025 Director Candidates

Mike Thorson

Mike and his wife, Eloise, retired from their family farm located between Browerville and Staples. They have twin sons and six grandchildren (ages 8 - 21).

Mike served 14 years as the Chair of the Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative Board. He represents TWEC on the board of its power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), where he also served as chair for several years. He represented GRE at the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives and ACES Power in Indiana.

Mike graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Agricultural Economics. He completed the Credentialed Cooperative Director, Board Leadership, and Director Gold programs offered through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He also completed the Blandin Leadership program.

Mike spent three years on active duty in the U.S. Army. He has been involved in our community having served on the Staples-Motley School Board, Todd County Economic Development Board, and the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Association Board. He 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 his education, experience, and common sense will continue to be important assets to TWEC as our system grows and adapts to the needs of members, the changing regulatory system, and the environment.

Marie Katterhagen

Marie and her husband, Dale, live on a farm northeast of Browerville. They have two grown sons and eight grandchildren.

Marie was employed at CentraCare Long Prairie since 1976. She was manager of surgical services for 30 years, retiring after 48 years of nursing. The Katterhagens dairy farmed for 30 years and now raise feeder cattle and crops.

Marie is active in her church in various roles and continues as a Eucharist minister. She just made her 11th trip to Guatemala to assist with surgeries for the underserved. She has also volunteered with Project Heal, an outreach clinic for the underserved in Central Minnesota.

For over 25 years, the Katterhagens continue to host Envirofest at their farm for all Todd County 6th graders, where they learn about all areas of conservation. They hosted Breakfast on the Farm in 2016 and 2024. Marie enjoys grandparenting, reading, quilting, and spending time with family and friends.

Appointed to fill a vacancy on the Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative Board in 2007, Marie currently serves as Secretary of the Board. 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.

“Now, more than ever, it is critical that the member-owners are represented by knowledgeable, committed leadership to work with legislators toward balanced solutions to our energy challenges, and to continue to work with Great River Energy to keep our rates affordable and transmission reliable,” she says. “Our challenge continues to be incorporating renewable energy, maintaining reliability, and affordability – while meeting the mandates set forth by our Minnesota Legislature.”

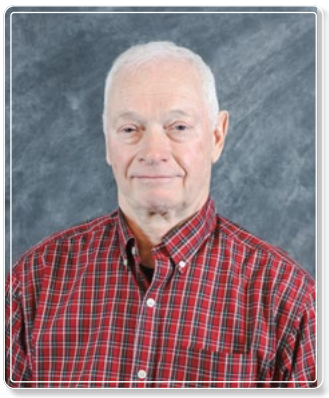
Eugene Roller

Eugene Roller lives and works on a dairy-crop farm by rural Hewitt. He recently turned the management part of the farm over to his youngest son. Eugene graduated from Bertha Hewitt High School in 1980. He then obtained an associate’s degree in sales and management. He has been married to his wife, Brenda, for 43 years. They have four children and 11 grandchildren.

Eugene currently is the chairman for Ottertail County Dairy Herd Improvement Association. He is also a supervisor for the Oak Valley Town Board. He is the superintendent for the Wadena County Fair dairy barn. He was a 4-H leader for many years. He served on the state Holstein Association Board and the corporate board for Associated Milk Producers, Inc. AMPI is a cheese and butter producing co-op that does 2.2 billion dollars of business annually.

Eugene would like to be on the TWEC Board of Directors to convey the ideas of the membership to the board. Eugene believes, “Electricity is going to be more popular in many different items, so we will have to have an infrastructure that can handle an increased demand.”

Steven Peterson



Steve has lived in Todd County his entire life. He graduated from Bertha-Hewitt and attended Wadena Area Technical Institute, completing the 11-month class of telephone central office. He worked on the family farm, along with other short-term employments before landing a position at First National Bank in Bertha. There, he primarily learned their insurance agency business which he ended up managing and then purchasing. Along with the agency, he became the IRA/HSA Administrator and Security Officer for the Bertha office and the other nine Star Bank offices. He retired first from the insurance agency and then the bank in January 2024.

Outside of the bank, Steve did various things at the Bertha-Hewitt School. Activities he was involved with include officiating football, boys and girls basketball, softball, and baseball. He was also recruited to announce for the indoor marching band concert for over 20 years. Currently, Steve does the public address announcements for football.

Steve served on the Bertha Volunteer Ambulance Service for 24 years. He was elected to the Hewitt City Council for six years and served as mayor for two. He also served on the Hewitt Fire Department for 27 years, serving as Fire Chief for 11 of those years. In 2016, he joined the Bertha Clinic Advisory Committee and is still an active member.

Steve joined the Hewitt Lions as a charter member where he served multiple terms as treasurer and president. He is currently a member of two 501 (c) (3) nonprofits, the Bertha Area Sportsman Club, of which he is president, and the Ringnecks Forevermore as a director.

Steve has always been interested in learning new things. He believes the chance to be on the board of a very successful cooperative would be a great opportunity to learn more and contribute from his past varied experience whenever possible.

Robb Oyster

Robb Oyster was born and raised on the family dairy farm in Hewitt. After graduating from Bertha-Hewitt High School, he worked some construction. By the end of that summer, he was married to Heidi and still is after 45 years. That same year, in the fall, he started to purchase some cows of his own. Robb and his wife have raised five children on their dairy farm near Hewitt. Now 18 grandchildren enjoy some farm life as well. He says he is still attending the school of hard knocks and is still learning a lot. The dairy is home to about 150 cows.

Robb previously served on the Northern Cooperative Board. He also served on the Bertha-Hewitt School Board. He has held, and is currently holding, leadership positions in his church congregation.

As a business owner, he is grateful to have a good, reliable source of electricity and would like the opportunity to conservatively help that continue.

Alex Roth

Alex Roth is the owner of the growing custom farming business, AR Farms. He recently opened a repair shop, AR Farms Repair and Service. Alex is from the Wadena-Verndale area and currently resides there with his two young boys and wife. Being from the area and communicating with the local farmers, he understands and hears the importance and challenges electricity has on daily farm operations.

As a candidate for a director position, Alex hopes to reach out to other young business and home-owners to receive their valued input. Alex is excited and motivated to serve Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative and the community!

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

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

Electrical Safety Demonstrations

During the months of January and February Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative visited 8 schools and groups and presented to over 350 students on electrical safety.

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/cogeneration***

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 15 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 in member's yard)	PRIMARY LINE (in member's yard)	THREE-PHASE LINE (in member's yard)
HORIZONTAL FEET OF CLEARANCE (ON EACH SIDE)	20 feet	10 feet	15 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 seven years. This helps us keep the lights on and the blink count minimal.

This spring/summer, TWEC is spraying all circuits coming out of the *Blueberry, Twin Lakes,* and *Orton* 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.

LOOK FOR THIS LOGO IN THE MAIL

Central CA Inc Applicators

Local Organizations Receive Grants

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative's Community Trust Board met in February to review the latest Operation Round Up applications. Five organizations received funding totaling $6,200. For under $1 a month, you can round up your electric bill to the nearest dollar to help local non-profits and organizations in our communities. The average annual donation is $6 per participating co-op member. That's nearly the cost of a specialty coffee or a kid's meal, yet its impact is great for the organizations that are affected by these Operation Round Up grants.

If you would like to "round up" your electric bill, scan the QR code with your mobile device camera.

Organization		Amount
Living Legacy Gardens/Central Lakes College Foundation	*Gazebo Reconstruction*	$2,000
Sebeka Lions	*Sebeka Park Shelter Upgrade*	$1,500
St. Ann's Catholic Church Calvary Cemetery Board	*Raising Foot Stones*	$1,000
Staples-Motley Softball Boosters	*Player Protection Upgrade*	$1,200
WDC Backpacks for Kids	*Weekend Food Backpack*	$500
Total		**$6,200**

Left to Right:
Noah Boelter – *Central Lakes College;*
Rachel Kossan, Oliviah Lorber, and Lilly Tyrrell – *Staples-Motley Softball Boosters*; Aaron Duncan and Mike Pete – *St. Ann's Calvary Cemetery Board*; Nate Loer – *WDC Backpacks for Kids.*

TWEC Board Minutes

Highlights from the January 29th, 2025, regular board meeting:

- *CEO Dan Carlisle gave a recap of the All-Employee Meeting held in January. The meeting included annual compliance training for all employees put on by STAR Energy. Each department gave an update to the employees, as well as an introduction to items coming in 2025.*
- *Board Member Mike Thorson gave the Great River Energy (GRE) report. GRE did not meet their year-end margin requirements of $23 million, so they were required to use $14 million in deferred revenue.*
- *Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the December and year-end financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 1 percent over budget, year-end 8 percent under budget. Energy revenue was 2 percent over budget, year-end 5.5 percent under budget. December's purchased power expense was 3 percent over budget, year-to-date 7 percent under budget. Tier is 2.43 and Equity is 40.91.*
- *Member & Energy Services Manager Allison Frederickson reported that the Nominating Committee met in January and nominated the following individuals to run for the two board positions at this year's annual meeting: Mike Thorson, Marie Katterhagen, Eugene Roller, Steven Peterson, Robb Oyster, Alexander Roth, and Kelly Frisbie (withdrew).*
- *The board approved a resolution setting the cooperative's debt limit at $60 million.*
- *Director of Corporate Services, IT, & Cybersecurity Abby Harrison presented findings from the NRECA Director Survey that TWEC participated in.*
- *Board Chair Miles Kuschel provided a legislative update starting at the national level. The new administration is already making substantial decisions towards the energy policy – from putting holds on grant funding to revoking electric vehicle initiatives to removing red tape to accelerate energy development projects.*

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:
Bob Kent (612) 528-5326
Wadena County:
Brandon Disselbrett (218) 580-8614
District 10 *(Todd & Wadena Counties)*:
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

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www.instagram.com/twec.coop

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative
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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*** with the subject line *"Reader's Contest"*. Be sure to include your name and TWEC service address. Entries must be received by **April 15th**.

1. This year, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative will be celebrating _____ years of service.
2. _____ energy remains the only large-scale, carbon-free baseload power source available today.
3. This year, members can vote for up to _____ candidates in the 2025 Director Elections.

Name:	**Your TWEC Account Number:**

Steven Seefeldt of **Browerville** was the winner of our January Reader's Contest.