



Todd-Wadena

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Pine to Prairie

www.toddwadena.coop

October 2025



Honoring Our History This Co-op Month

Eighty-five years ago, a small group of determined neighbors in central Minnesota set out to bring light and opportunity to their rural communities. With the help of the 1936 Rural Electrification Act, they formed Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative in 1940. Though the early years were uncertain (membership cost \$5 during the Great Depression, and wiring a farm was expensive) these pioneers believed electricity could transform rural life. By 1941, their vision became reality when the first members received power.

From those humble beginnings, Todd-Wadena has grown to serve more than 9,000 member-owners

across Todd, Wadena, and surrounding counties. Over the decades, the cooperative has continually adapted to new technologies and energy challenges—from stringing the first power lines to investing in today's smart grid systems. Through it all, one value has never changed: the cooperative's mission to deliver *safe, reliable, affordable power*.

As we celebrate 85 years of service during National Co-op Month, we honor the spirit of cooperation that built this co-op. Todd-Wadena remains committed not just to providing electricity, but to strengthening our communities—through scholarships, youth programs, charitable giving, and local development. *It's the cooperative difference.*

85 YEARS
1940-2025

THE SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES



VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP



DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL



MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION



AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE



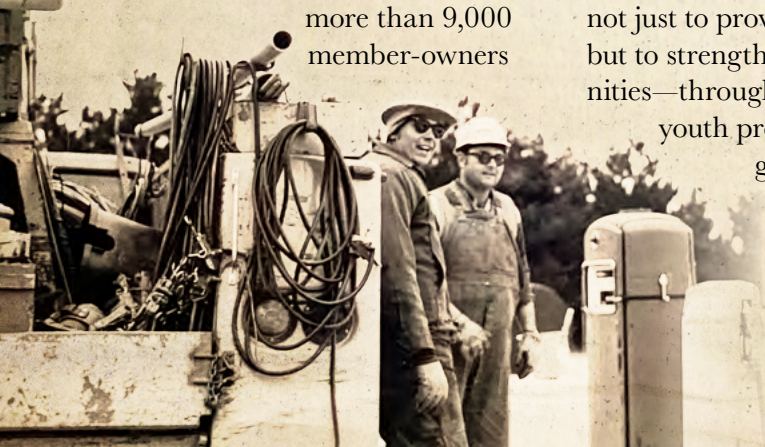
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION



COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES



CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY



AI Among Us

Artificial Intelligence, or “AI”, is making headlines in the news and seems like a new concept to many; however, AI has been incorporated into our everyday lives and workplaces for years. When you search online, you’ve probably started to see targeted ads that reflect your interests on your social media. Or perhaps you use Alexa or Siri to help you find what you are looking for. These are all versions of AI that many people use on a regular basis.

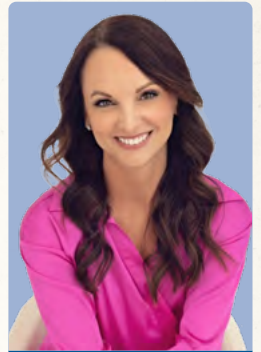
It was actually back in the 1950s when artificial intelligence first gained its name. Back then, large machines were taking data and organizing it by following a set of rules or programming that were put in place by human intervention. Fast forward to today when the

rapid evolution of AI is now playing a major role in our ability to navigate the internet, complete multi-step workflows, create efficiencies, and handle more tasks that require less human interaction and input.

The electric industry is being transformed by the use of AI. From energy generation to distribution, AI is making an impact. Predictive models are used to identify energy use, weather patterns, outages, and more. This reduces unscheduled down times and allows cooperatives to take a more proactive approach. Many companies, including utilities, utilize chatbots and virtual assistants that offer inquiries 24/7 to customers. While TWEC has not incorporated this feature at this time, it is just another example of AI use that has

been around for many years.

Unfortunately, AI has also allowed hackers/bad actors to more easily go on the attack, develop code, fake an email, or even sound like a legitimate person on the other side of a telephone. Here at TWEC, we are taking a proactive approach in our cybersecurity – utilizing AI as one of many tools we have in place to protect against an attack. It is of the utmost importance to keep your data secure in an ever-changing world of technology.



Abby Harrison
Director of Corporate
Services, IT, &
Cybersecurity

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Director of Corporate Services, IT, & Cybersecurity

AI Timeline

1956 - The term “Artificial Intelligence” was first used by John McCarthy at the Dartmouth Conference, with the development of intelligent machines.

1961 - The first industrial robot (Unimate) was used on a General Motors assembly line.

1970s–1980 - This time period was termed “AI Winter” because funding and enthusiasm declined after early systems failed to deliver on big promises.

2004 - Major email providers (like Gmail and Yahoo) began widely deploying AI, using machine learning spam filters, making email far more usable.

2002 - iRobot released the Roomba, the first mass-produced autonomous robotic vacuum.

1999 - Netflix began operating AI, using collaborative filtering algorithms to make DVD recommendations for customers.

2006 - Facebook launched its news feed and began using AI for ad targeting and content suggestions.

2006 - Netflix launched the Netflix Prize, a \$1 million competition to improve its recommendation algorithm — a landmark in consumer AI.

2010 - TWEC incorporated AI for outage predictions.

2011 - Apple introduced Siri, bringing AI-powered virtual assistance to smartphones.

2021 - TWEC rolled out its Aquanta Pilot program, an AI-based smart water heater controller.

2017 - Apple introduced Face ID, the first mass-market 3D facial recognition on smartphones.

2014 - Amazon released Alexa, bringing voice-based AI assistants into homes.

2011 - IBM’s Watson won Jeopardy, showcasing natural language processing and knowledge retrieval at scale.

2022 - ChatGPT (from OpenAI) was released publicly and quickly went mainstream.

2023 - AI detection and plagiarism-checking tools began rolling out in schools as generative AI adoption grew.

2024 - TWEC implemented an AI-based cybersecurity tool.

2025 - General Motors and other automakers announced plans to deploy AI at scale for autonomous driving systems.

Sign Up for Dual Fuel Load Control Notifications

Members who participate in our **dual fuel load management program** can receive a notification of control events! To manage or receive notifications from Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, you will need a SmartHub account.



SmartHub Instructions:

Sign in (or sign up) at toddwadena.smarthub.coop. If you haven't previously added a contact for notifications, you will need to start at **Step 1** below, otherwise you may go directly to **Step 2** to enable Dual Heat Control notifications.

1 Add Contacts: Under the settings menu, click *Contact Methods*. Add an email contact and/or a phone contact. Follow directions and enter verification code where appropriate.

2 Set Up Notifications: Under the settings menu, click *Manage Notifications*. Select *Reports*, then find *Dual Heat Control*. Use the dropdown menu under *Text Message* and/or *Email* to select the contact(s) you wish to receive load control notifications, and then click *Save*.

Method	Contact	Status	Action
Voice Calls		Enrolled - Voice Calls	
Text Messages		Enrolled - Text Messages	
Text Messages		Enrolled - Text Messages	
Emails		Enrolled - Emails	
Emails		Enrolled - Emails	

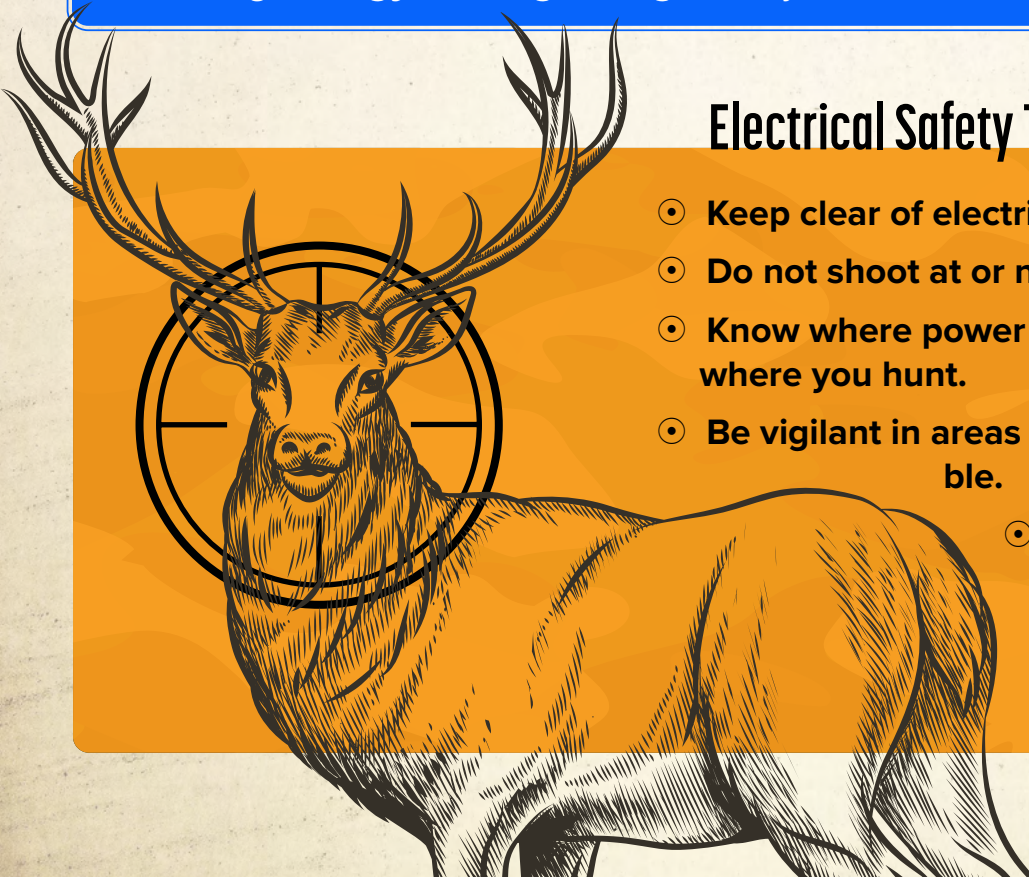
Alert Type	Description	Text Message	Email
Air Conditioning Control		Multiple	Multiple
Dual Heat Control		Multiple	Multiple
Gen Jet (Generators)		Text Message	Email
Irrigation Control Notice		Text Message	Email
Peak Alert Control		Multiple	Multiple

Scan the QR code to follow us on Facebook and join in on the **Co-op Month** celebrations with fun games and activities, including **Energy Savings Bingo**, for your chance to win prizes!



Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters

- Keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines.
- Know where power lines are located where you hunt.
- Be vigilant in areas where lines are less visible.
- Never place deer stands on utility poles.
- Never place decoys on power lines or equipment.



We Want to Hear From You!



ONLINE SURVEY

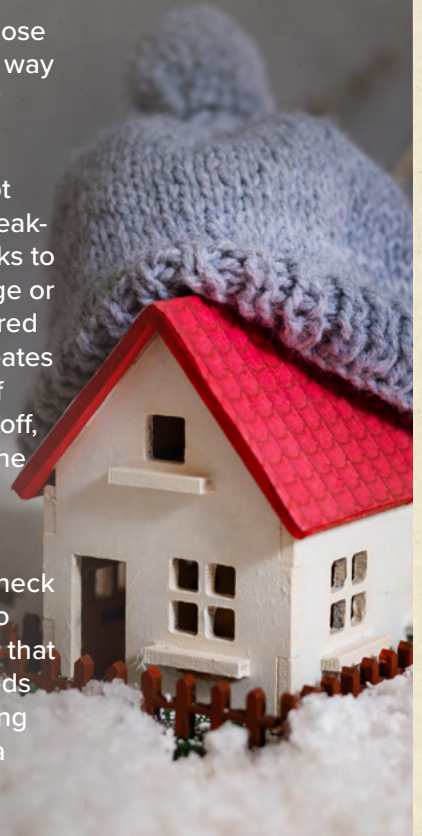
Please take a few minutes to complete our survey (*on pages 5 and 6*). Answer the questions and mail it to us along with your electric bill payment, drop it off at the office, or place it in the drop box outside our office. If you prefer, you can complete the survey online by scanning the QR code to the left or by visiting www.toddwadena.coop/2025survey. All surveys submitted will be eligible to win one of 15 \$25 energy credits.

**One survey per household/business. Surveys must be submitted by November 25th, 2025.*

Snowbird Checklist Before Heading South

This is the time of year when some members start to prepare to head south to avoid the harsh Minnesota winter. To help keep your electric use to a minimum while you're away, we recommend you:

- ❖ Turn off the water supply, make sure to drain the pipes, and give each toilet a flush. Don't forget to close and drain outdoor faucets. Exceptions include homes that use a hot water heating system, or homes with a fire sprinkler supply.
- ❖ Unplug and disconnect electrical devices that are not in use—instant-on devices such as TVs, coffee makers, gaming consoles, computers, printers, and unused freezers and refrigerators. These items are still drawing a small amount of electricity even when they are not “in use.”
- ❖ Turn your thermostat down to 55 degrees. This should prevent pipes and drains from freezing, given there are no significant weatherization leaks or a lack of insulation. Consider installing a wi-fi thermostat so you can monitor your home's heating system from afar.
- ❖ Make sure your windows and doors close tightly. If they don't, cold air will find a way inside. There is still time to install new weatherstripping if needed.
- ❖ For safety and reliability, please do not shut your heating system off at the breaker. When a breaker is turned off, it looks to our system like there may be an outage or problem, and the cooperative is required to send a crew to investigate. This creates unnecessary service calls and costs. If you want to turn your heating system off, please use the switch or controls on the equipment itself—not the breaker.
- ❖ We also suggest snowbirds entrust a neighbor, relative, or close friend to check in on their home/property from time to time. Harsh winters come with storms that may knock out power for longer periods of time. A breaker may also trip; heating systems are not able to turn on after a tripped breaker.



If you are a snowbird, you can temporarily change your mailing address with us while you are away from your property. This ensures that you will receive your TWEC billing statements, newsletters, and other important information. Please contact the office at (218) 631-3120.

Cold Weather Rule

Each year, some members are unable to pay their electric bill during cold weather months. The *Minnesota Cold Weather Rule* was established to protect residential members from electrical service disconnection between October 1st and April 30th.

Cold Weather Rule protection is available ONLY if the following conditions exist:

- 1) The disconnection would affect your main heating source
- 2) You and Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative agree on a payment plan
- 3) You have returned the Cold Weather Rule form to TWEC

The Cold Weather Rule does not prevent winter disconnections. If you have a DISCONNECTION NOTICE on your bill between October 1st and April 30th, you must act before the disconnect date on the bill.

2025 Member Survey

1) Using a 5-point scale on which **1** means *very dissatisfied* and **5** means *very satisfied*, how satisfied are you with **Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative**?

VERY DISSATISFIED (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) VERY SATISFIED

2) Why did you rate your satisfaction as such? _____

3) On a 5-point scale where **1** means *falls short of your expectations* and **5** means *exceeds your expectations*, to what extent has **Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative** met your expectations?

FALLS SHORT (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

4) On a 5-point scale where **1** means *very poor* and **5** means *excellent*, how would you rate **Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative** on the following?

	VERY POOR					EXCELLENT
a. Delivering good value for the money	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(N/A)
b. Resolving issues or problems	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(N/A)
c. Having highly-trained, professional employees	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(N/A)
d. Having friendly, courteous employees	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(N/A)
e. Having members' best interests at heart	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(N/A)
f. Communicating with you and keeping you informed	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(N/A)
h. Supporting the local community	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(N/A)

5) On a 5-point scale where **1** means *very poor* and **5** means *excellent*, how would you rate **Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative** on the following?

	VERY POOR					EXCELLENT
a. Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(N/A)
b. Keeping longer outages to a minimum	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(N/A)
c. Restoring power quickly after an outage	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(N/A)
d. Keeping you informed on the status of outages	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(N/A)
e. Being easy to reach to report a power outage	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(N/A)

6) What programs have you participated in during the last 12 months?

- ☐ Load Management ☐ Rebates ☐ Solar Installations
☐ Load Control Notifications ☐ Outage Notifications

7) Concerning **Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative**, have you done any of the following in the past **12 months**? Have you...

a. Attended the annual meeting?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
b. Spoken with a member of the Board of Directors?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
c. Voted in a co-op election?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
d. Received a capital credits patronage (energy credit)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
e. Participated in Operation Round Up?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know

Continued on page 6

2025 Member Survey (Continued from page 5)

8) Have you or would you be interested in running for the Board of Directors Election? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Why or why not? _____

9) Are there any issues you would like your Board of Directors to address? If so, please explain.

10) What do you see as the biggest energy challenges in the next 10 years (*choose all that apply*)?

- ☐ Solar ☐ Renewables ☐ Legislation ☐ Power Supply Mix/Generation Facilities
☐ Significant load increase ☐ Transmission Buildout ☐ Other: _____

11) What topics would you like to see covered more in the newsletter (*choose all that apply*)?

- ☐ Legislative Topics Related to Energy ☐ Electrical Safety
☐ Load Management Programs/Rebates ☐ Technical Topics ☐ Community Involvement
☐ Board Minutes and Happenings ☐ Other: _____

12) What issues do you feel are most important for the co-op to advocate with the Minnesota Legislature?

- ☐ Affordable Rates (*MN Carbon Free 2040 Bill*) ☐ Renewable Energy
☐ Net Metering ☐ Lifting the Nuclear Moratorium ☐ Other: _____

13) What new technologies would you be interested in?

- ☐ Residential Solar ☐ Home Battery Storage ☐ Electric Vehicles
☐ Smart Thermostats ☐ Other: _____

14) Which of the following is most important to you (*pick only one*)?

- ☐ Affordable Rates ☐ Reliability ☐ Increasing Renewable Energy Generation
☐ Community Involvement ☐ Returning Capital Credits ☐ Equity

15) How do you stay up to date with the co-op (*choose all that apply*)?

- ☐ Pine to Prairie Newsletter ☐ Instagram ☐ Radio ☐ Facebook
☐ Website ☐ Bill Message/Inserts

16) Do you view yourself as a member or as a customer of your electric co-op, or both?

- ☐ Member ☐ Customer ☐ Both ☐ Don't Know

17) How long have you been a member of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative?

- ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1-5 years ☐ 6-10 years ☐ 11-15 years ☐ 16-20 years
☐ 21-30 years ☐ 31-40 years ☐ 41-50 years ☐ 51 or more ☐ Unsure

18) How many people live in your household including yourself? _____

19) Do you have any comments for Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative?

Please list your account number so we can contact you if you are one of the 15 winners of the \$25 energy credit drawing. Your account number can be found on your electric bill.

Account #: _____

TWEC Board Minutes

Highlights from the August 26, 2025, regular board meeting:

- *Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the July financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 13 percent under budget. Energy revenue was 7 percent under budget. July's purchased power expense was 15 percent under budget. TIER is 1.83 and Equity is 41.37.*
- *Board Chair Miles Kuschel showed a video clip on how solar is affecting farmland across the United States. The host of the video was a speaker at the Energy Issues Summit earlier in August. The Board and management team also shared highlights from the Summit.*
- *Board Member Mike Thorson gave the Great River Energy (GRE) report. Financials continue to be strong as July margin came in at \$22.3 million versus a budget of \$20.3 million.*
- *Matt Lacey, director of transmission business strategy and development for GRE, joined the meeting to discuss zonal transmission with the TWEC Board and management team. GRE has developed a model that breaks out transmission costs by member, based upon zonal pricing related to their service territory.*
- *Jon Brekke, vice president and chief power supply officer at GRE, joined the meeting to give an update on GRE's power supply and go over their resource portfolio. GRE is on track to meet Minnesota's carbon free regulation balancing energy purchases from MISO, wind development projects, and utilizing its contract with Rainbow Energy.*
- *The Board decided to move forward with a demand response unit tower extension agreement with GRE that will extend the end-of-life deadline to June 1, 2027.*
- *Director of Corporate Services, IT, & Cybersecurity Abby Harrison went over high-level details for each of the six strategic objectives identified at the Board's strategic planning session in May. She highlighted items that will be presented in the 2026 budget.*

Sales Tax Exemption for Residential Electric Heat

With the start of another heating season, we would like to inform our residential members who have electric heat as their primary heating system that their electric bills are exempt from Minnesota sales tax from November-April.

Please Note: All certificates signed during previous years are **ON FILE** and **NO REFILING** is needed. If you have a signed certificate on file, bills you receive will not include sales tax on your usage.

If you qualify, go to www.toddwadena.coop to apply for sales tax exemption for electric heat. If you have questions regarding your eligibility, contact the Minnesota Department of Revenue at (651) 296-6181 or toll free at (800) 657-3777.

****Off-peak and Dual Fuel program participants are already tax exempt, so there is no need to file this form.**

Halloween Safety Tips



WALK SAFELY

- Cross the street at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks.
- Always walk on sidewalks or paths. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible. Children should walk on direct routes with the fewest street crossings.



TRICK OR TREAT WITH AN ADULT

- Children under the age of 12 should not be alone at night without adult supervision. If kids are mature enough to be without supervision, they should stick to familiar areas that are well lit and trick-or-treat in groups.



KEEP COSTUMES CREATIVE AND SAFE

- Decorate costumes and bags with reflective tape or stickers and, if possible, choose light colors.
- Have kids carry glow sticks or flashlights to help them see and be seen by drivers.



DRIVE EXTRA SAFELY ON HALLOWEEN

- Drive slowly, anticipate heavy pedestrian traffic and turn your headlights on earlier in the day to spot children from greater distances.
- Popular trick-or-treating hours are 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. so be especially alert to kids during those hours.

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

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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  

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

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 431

Wadena, MN 56482

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Please Note
Our offices will
be closed on the
following dates:

➤ **Wednesday, October 29th**
for employee training.
➤ **Tuesday, November 11th**
for Veterans Day.

October 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 **November 15th**.

1. AI started back in the _____s, where large machines were taking data and organizing it following a set of rules or programming.
2. Don't forget to take our 2025 member survey. Surveys must be submitted by November _____, 2025.
3. Members who participate in our dual _____ load management program can receive notification of control events.

Name:

Your TWEC Account Number:

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