



Todd-Wadena
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Pine to Prairie
www.toddwadena.coop
October 2026

Representing You at Great River Energy

By Mike Thorson, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative Director

It has been my honor to serve you, our member-owners, on the Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative Board since 1974. In 1976, I was given the additional privilege of representing Todd-Wadena members on the Great River Energy Board of Directors, which at that time was known as Cooperative Power.

Our wholesale power supplier, Great River Energy, is a generation and transmission cooperative owned by its member distribution cooperatives, including Todd-Wadena Electric. That means we are not simply purchasing electricity from another company; we are also owners. Because we are owners, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative has a voice in the



Mike Thorson, 1970s

decisions that shape the future of our power supply.

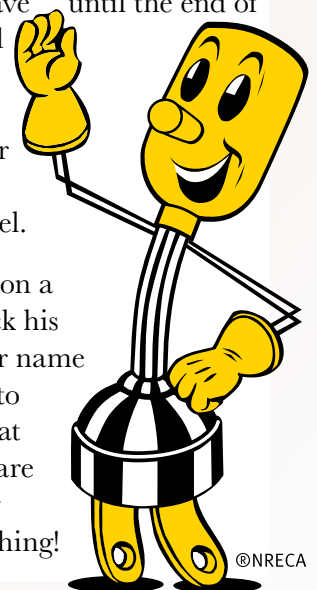
Serving on the Great River Energy Board involves much more than attending a monthly meeting. Before each meeting, I spend hours reviewing detailed board materials that include financial reports, power supply information, energy market updates, proposed projects, regulatory developments, risk assessments, and long-term planning documents.

Where's Willie Wiredhand?

October is **Co-op Month**, and we're celebrating with a fun online challenge! Willie Wiredhand—our longtime cooperative mascot—has been exploring our website, checking out the programs, people, and principles that make electric cooperatives unique.

Each week in October, we'll share clues to help you track him down. Follow the hints, explore the co-op's website, and see if you can discover where Willie is plugged in. You'll have until the end of the month to find all four hidden Willie Wiredhands. Hints will be posted on our website, Facebook, and YouTube channel.

When you spot him on a webpage, simply click his photo and enter your name and service address to be entered to win that week's prize. There are four separate weekly prizes, so keep searching!



®NRECA

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Built for Places Like Ours

October is National Co-op Month – it's a good opportunity to look at why electric cooperatives were created in the first place, and why the cooperative model continues to make sense for rural Minnesota today.

In the 1930s and 1940s, electricity was becoming common in cities, but much of rural America remained without it. Extending electric lines across miles of countryside to serve relatively few homes and farms simply didn't provide the same financial return as serving more densely populated areas, leaving many rural communities without electric service.

Electric cooperatives were formed to build the infrastructure and provide electric service in rural areas. Out of this movement, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC) was established to bring electricity to the homes and farms throughout our area.

More than 85 years later, the electric system has changed dramatically. But one of the fundamental challenges of serving a rural area has not: we have a lot of infrastructure serving relatively few people. TWEC currently serves approximately 4.1 members for every mile of distribution line. Across Minnesota, investor-owned and municipal utilities average approximately 32 customers per mile.

Think about what that difference means. A mile of electric line requires poles, wire, transformers, and other equipment – whether it serves four members or 32. It still needs to be inspected, maintained,

cleared of vegetation, repaired after storms, and eventually rebuilt or replaced. At TWEC, those costs are spread across approximately four members. A more densely populated utility may have roughly eight times as many customers over which to spread many of those same costs.

That difference in line density has a significant impact on the cost of providing electric service. It is also one reason comparing the rates or monthly service charges of a rural electric cooperative with those of a utility serving a more densely populated area isn't always an apples-to-apples comparison.

TWEC owns and maintains more than 2,300 miles of distribution line across our service territory. Every mile represents an investment our members depend on, regardless of whether that mile serves a handful of rural homes, a farm, or a growing business.

That reality requires us to be thoughtful about how we manage the cooperative. We have to balance the investments needed to maintain a safe and reliable electric system with the impact those investments have on our members. Keeping our members' best interests at the heart of each decision we make is the cooperative difference in action.



Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO &
General Counsel

TWEC Board Minutes:

Highlights from the August 31st, 2026, regular board meeting:

- A resolution was drafted and presented to the board, stating the board's desire to update its Bylaws and present proposed amendments to the membership for a vote at TWEC's 2027 Annual Meeting. The resolution was approved.
- CEO Dan Carlisle shared about a recent meeting with Great River Energy's (GRE) transmission group to discuss potential upgrades and improvements to the transmission infrastructure feeding TWEC's substations.
- Carlisle, as acting legal counsel, gave the Annual Fiduciary Duty Report which was accepted by the board.
- Board Member Mike Thorson gave the GRE board report, noting that July financials were very strong due to the hot, dry weather.
- Lisa Graba-Meech, CFO, presented the July financials to the board. Monthly kWh sales were 29 percent over budget. Energy revenue was 20 percent over budget. July's purchased power expense was 30 percent over budget. TIER is 2.14 and Equity is 41.86.
- The board decided to implement a \$75,000 PCA on the irrigation rate class to recover one-half of its increased cost share for May, June, and July.
- Dave Noess, with Federated Insurance, gave a presentation on the "Federated Difference."
- The following individuals were appointed to the 2027 Nominating Committee: Wally Wiese, Heather Gilreath, Diane Breitling, Ray Gildow, Lloyd Lanz, John Dulas, Annette Adamietz, Danny Skogen, Aaron Wendel, Jon Krause, and Bruce Lund.
- Member & Energy Services Manager Allison Frederickson gave an update on the Aclara DRU changeout project. The team has completed over 2,300 changeouts and has approximately 980 service orders remaining.
- Graba-Meech highlighted 2025 Key Ratio Trend Analysis results.

Daniel Carlisle
President/CEO & General Counsel

Representing You at Great River Energy

By Mike Thorson, TWEC Director

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During meetings, directors receive reports from Great River Energy's leadership team, ask questions, review performance, and participate in discussions about the issues affecting our member cooperatives. We also take part in committee meetings, strategic planning sessions, educational opportunities, and conversations focused on reliability, emerging technology, cybersecurity, public policy, environmental requirements, and the changing energy industry.

One of the things that has impressed me most about serving on the Great River Energy Board is how far ahead we must think. Many of the decisions we make today will not just affect next year's electric bills, they help shape our cooperative system for the next 20 to 30 years.

Each year, the Board approves budgets, reviews wholesale rate strategies, oversees financial performance, and helps guide major investments in generation, transmission, substations, technology, and other infrastructure. We also evaluate where new transmission facilities may be needed to meet future electric demand and strengthen the reliability of the regional grid.

The Great River Energy Board also makes long-term power supply decisions. Those decisions can include power purchase agreements lasting 20 or 30 years.



Congratulations to TWEC Board Member Mike Thorson on receiving an NRECA Regional Award.

Entering into a long-term agreement requires careful consideration of projected energy needs, market conditions, reliability, risk, and financial obligations. The goal is to secure the power our member cooperatives will need while obtaining the best possible long-term value and protecting members from unnecessary price volatility.

One of the most important parts of my role is to ensure the perspective of Todd-Wadena Electric's members is heard. Rural electric cooperatives face unique opportunities and challenges, and I take seriously the responsibility of representing our members during discussions and decisions at Great River Energy.

Just as importantly, I bring information back home. Serving on the Great River Energy Board gives me firsthand knowledge of regional energy issues, industry trends, financial challenges, and future opportunities. I can share that information with the Todd-Wadena Electric Board so we can make better-informed decisions for our cooperative.

This connection between the two boards helps ensure that Todd-Wadena Electric is not simply reacting to decisions after they are made. We have a seat at the table and a voice in shaping those decisions.



Mike Thorson with his wife, Eloise, and their son.

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



Winter Departure Checklist for Snowbirds

Turn off and drain your water system.

Shut off the main water supply, drain interior plumbing, and flush each toilet. Be sure to close and drain all outdoor faucets. Note: Homes with hot-water heating systems or fire sprinkler supplies should not shut off their water.

Unplug unused electronics.

Devices like TVs, coffee makers, gaming consoles, computers, printers, and unused refrigerators or freezers continue to draw power even when switched off. Disconnecting them reduces phantom energy use and protects equipment during outages.

Set your thermostat to 55°F.

This temperature helps prevent frozen pipes as long as your home is properly insulated and weather-sealed. A Wi-Fi thermostat is a smart upgrade—it allows you to monitor and adjust your home's heating system remotely.

Check windows and doors for tight seals.

Cold air will find any gap. Ensure everything closes securely, and install fresh weatherstripping if needed. A few minutes of prep now can prevent costly issues later.

Do not shut off your heating system at the breaker.

Turning off a heating system at the breaker can appear to us as a power outage or equipment failure, which triggers a required service call. If you need the system off, use the unit's own switch or controls—not the breaker.

Ask someone you trust to check in periodically.

Minnesota winters can bring extended outages and heavy storms. A neighbor, friend, or family member can confirm your home has power, ensure breakers haven't tripped, and alert you to any issues before they escalate.

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.

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 through April. **Please Note:** If you have signed a certificate for a previous year it is **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.*

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 and keep it current
- 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.

Dual Fuel Load Control Test Events

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative will be dispatching **two upcoming load control test events** for members enrolled in the Dual Fuel program. These tests help ensure your heating system and our load control equipment are operating properly and ready for the winter season.

If you participate in the Dual Fuel load management program, please make sure your heating system is turned on and ready to operate during the test periods.

Scheduled Test Events:

- **October 28th** from 6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
- **November 17th** from 6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

***Please note:** If the temperature is above 55°F, the test event will be cancelled.*



Dual Fuel Members: Check Your Back-up System Fuel Supply

Members of Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC) who are on the Dual Fuel load management program are encouraged to make sure they have **adequate supplies of their secondary fuel source for winter.**

As a reminder, the primary heating systems of participants can be controlled up to 12 hours per day and up to 400 hours per heating season. Control occurs on days of high electrical demand, high wholesale energy prices, and/or system emergencies. Both morning and evening control is expected throughout the cold weather months. If you have any questions, please contact TWEC's office.

Load Management Program Verification Notice

MISO (our power grid operator) has asked all of its distribution co-ops, including TWEC to provide certain member information (meter number, meter address, account, and load management program) for members who are enrolled in load management programs.

The information is being requested as part of a verification process of the participation in the load management programs which result in a significant cost savings for members and the cooperative.

We are providing this notice because TWEC is committed to being fully transparent and to protecting our mem-

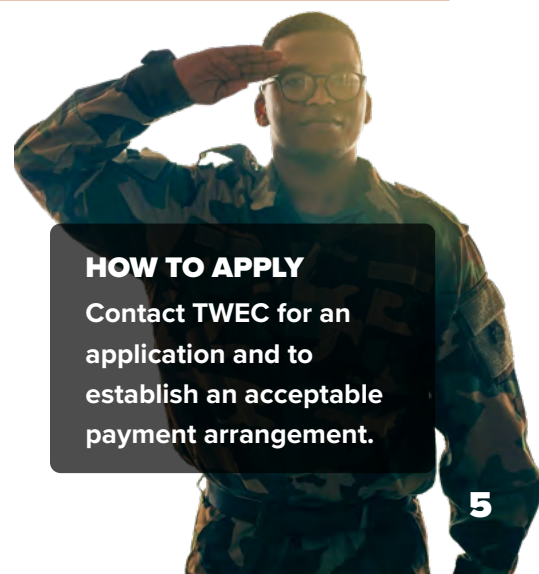
bers' personally identifiable information. The Cooperative uses and discloses personally identifiable information about members in defined and responsible ways. In this instance this information is being furnished in order to carryout our load management operations and to benefit our members. TWEC does not sell member information or otherwise share it without an appropriate and lawful purpose or requirement.

If you have questions or concerns about this request or how the requested data will be used, please contact Allison at the Cooperative. Thank you for your continued support of the load management programs at the Cooperative.

Minnesota Law Offers Shut Off Protection for Military Personnel

When a household member has been ordered into active duty, for deployment or for a change of duty station, some members may find it hard to pay their utility bills. *Minnesota Statute 325E.028* protects these military personnel from shut-off if they cannot pay their utility bills in full if such residential member:

- 1) If your household income is below the state median household income or you are receiving energy assistance, **and** you have entered into a satisfactory payment plan with TWEC and remain current with payments under that plan.
- 2) If your household income is above the state median household income **and** you have entered into a plan with TWEC, establishing a reasonable payment schedule that considers the financial resources of your household, and you remain current with payments under that plan.



HOW TO APPLY

Contact TWEC for an application and to establish an acceptable payment arrangement.

"Spooky" Energy Efficiency Tips for Your Home



Don't Let Phantom Energy Haunt Your Home

Many electronics, including TVs, gaming systems, coffee makers, and chargers, continue to draw power even when they appear off. Unplug devices you're not using or connect them to a smart power strip that can automatically cut power. It's an easy way to make those phantom loads disappear.



Enjoy the Fall "Shoulder Season" Before the Chill Creeps In

Cool mornings and mild afternoons make fall a great time to give your heating and cooling system a break. Open windows when the weather allows and use ceiling fans to stay comfortable. Fall is also a good time to schedule HVAC maintenance so your system is ready before winter sends a chill through the air.



Seal Up Drafts Before Winter Winds Howl

Small gaps around doors and windows can let heated air escape and cold air sneak inside. Use weatherstripping or caulk to seal drafts, and consider insulated curtains for additional protection. A few simple improvements can keep cold drafts from haunting your home all winter.



Don't Let Dust Goblins Clog Your Furnace

A dirty furnace filter restricts airflow and forces your heating system to work harder. Check filters regularly and replace or clean them as recommended. Keeping airflow clear helps improve efficiency and prevents those "dust goblins" from causing trouble when temperatures drop.



Let the Sun Cast Its Warm Glow

Open curtains and blinds on sunny days to take advantage of natural warmth. Sunlight can help warm your home without using additional energy. Once the sun goes down, close them again to help keep that warmth from vanishing into the night.



Close the Fireplace Damper to Keep the Cold Spirits Out

An open fireplace damper can allow heated indoor air to escape up the chimney while drawing cold air into your home. When the fireplace is completely cool and not in use, close the damper to keep warm air inside and cold drafts from creeping in.

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

Demand Response Unit Change-Out

This summer, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (TWEC), began a project to replace demand response units (DRUs) associated with several of our load management programs. This large-scale project continues to progress.

Members may see TWEC meter technicians Mike and Bob working throughout our service territory, or a contracted Bergstrom Electric electrician. The contracted crews will be driving Bergstrom Electric vans as pictured.

With the majority of this equipment located on the outside of homes, barns, or other outbuildings, members will not be contacted prior to the exchange. Crews will complete the work as efficiently as possible; in most cases, members may simply notice crews working near their meter or service area for a short period of time.



October is Cybersecurity Month

Cybersecurity Month is a great reminder that protecting your personal and workplace information starts with a few simple habits. Cyber threats continue to evolve, but so can your defenses. Strengthen your digital safety by keeping these four best practices in mind:

- **Use long, unique, and complex passwords.** Avoid reusing passwords across accounts. A strong password—ideally 12+ characters with a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols—makes it significantly harder for attackers to break in.
- **Enable multifactor authentication (MFA).** MFA adds an extra layer of protection by requiring a second verification step, such as a text code or authentication app. Even if your password is compromised, MFA helps keep your account secure.
- **Keep your software updated.** Regular updates patch security vulnerabilities and help protect your devices from new threats. Turn on automatic updates whenever possible.
- **Watch out for phishing and scams.** Be cautious with unexpected emails, texts, or calls asking for personal information. Look for red flags like urgent language, unfamiliar senders, or suspicious links.



Scam Alert

A big thank you to the TWEC member who recently alerted us to a scam targeting electric cooperative members. In this case, a caller claimed to be a consumer advocate and insisted there were errors on the member's electric bill that needed to be corrected before the next billing cycle. Fortunately, the member recognized several red flags and hung up.

These calls are not legitimate, and these so-called “consumer advocates” are not associated with TWEC.

If you receive a call like this:

- Do not share any personal information
- Do not confirm account details
- Hang up immediately

Your awareness helps protect not only your own information but also the safety of our entire membership. If you believe you've received a scam call, please contact us directly. We can verify your account, answer questions, and—importantly—share scam alerts on social media to keep other members informed.

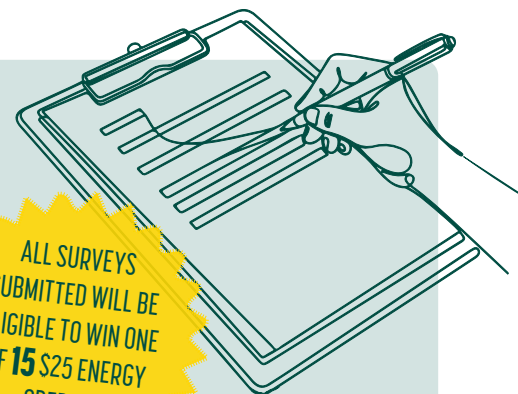
Don't forget! Planning for Tomorrow Starts With You

The 2026 Member Survey is still open until October 26th, 2026. You can find it in the September Pine to Prairie newsletter, or take it online here: www.toddwadena.coop/2026survey (or scan the QR code).

Your feedback helps shape the future of our cooperative—thank you for taking a few minutes to share your thoughts.



ALL SURVEYS
SUBMITTED WILL BE
ELIGIBLE TO WIN ONE
OF 15 \$25 ENERGY
CREDITS.



A monthly publication for members & friends of



Todd-Wadena
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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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.

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www.instagram.com/twec.coop

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative

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October Reader's Contest

For Cooperative Month, we are doing something different for our Reader's Contest! For your chance to be entered in a drawing to **win a \$10 credit** on your bill, fill out this crossword puzzle and include it with your TWEC bill, mail to *TWEC, P.O. Box 431, Wadena, MN 56482*, or email a photo 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 25th**.

A crossword puzzle grid is shown with a background image of a forest. The grid is 10 columns wide and 10 rows high. The starting numbers are: 1 (top row, column 4), 2 (top row, column 5), 3 (second row, column 1), 4 (third row, column 7), 5 (third row, column 8), 6 (fourth row, column 4), and 7 (bottom row, column 1).

Name:	
Your TWEC Account Number:	

Across

1. Strong and secure, ideally 12+ characters with mixed symbols.
3. National Co-op Month.
6. Willie's last name as you search the website each week during Co-op Month.
7. Electrical contractors replacing Demand Response Units (DRU) across the territory.

Down

2. Found in the September newsletter for members to complete.
4. A type of electronic load that quietly draws power even when it appears “off.”
5. Mike Thorson is celebrating 50 years of service on the Board of Directors at Great River _____.

Jacob Welde of Wadena was the August Reader's Contest winner.