



# Volts and Jolts

Published monthly for the members of  
**RED LAKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, Inc.**

*One of the Minnkota Power Systems*

**SERVING THE FOUR-COUNTY AREA OF MARSHALL, PENNINGTON, RED LAKE AND POLK**

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MAY 2011

## May is Electrical Safety Month

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and Red Lake Electric Cooperative is joining with the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) to promote a healthy respect for electricity and increase awareness of electrical hazards.

Electricity is an increasing presence in our modern lives. As our reliance on electricity grows, so does the potential for electrical safety hazards. Electrical incidents and fires disrupt countless lives and result in the loss of billions of dollars in productivity and assets each year.

The most recent statistical data from the National Fire Protection

Association indicates an annual average of almost 51,000 home fires involving electrical failure or malfunction, claiming nearly 500 lives, injuring more than 1,400 people, and resulting in more than \$1.3 billion in property damage. In addition, statistics from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission show that nearly 400 people are electrocuted in the United States each year.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May to increase (7122004.01 William L. Langlois) public awareness of the electrical hazards around us at home, work, school,



and play. This year's campaign challenges people across the country to evaluate the electrical safety of their own homes, learning more about their electrical systems and electrical devices in the process. Outreach materials feature tools to

help with the identification and correction of potential electrical hazards before a more serious situation can result.

"Recognizing National Electrical Safety Month this May is an opportunity for us to make a difference in our community by helping others avoid the personal tragedy behind these statistics," said Kevin Reich, member services manager. "We're excited to be part of this national effort to raise awareness about potential home electrical hazards and the importance of electrical safety."

Electrical safety awareness and education among consumers, families, employees, and communities

will prevent electrical fires, injuries, and fatalities. Making a few easy changes to improve safety can also lead to increased energy efficiency and savings on utility bills.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May to increase public awareness of the electrical hazards around us at home, work, school, and play. ESFI is a non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety.

Visit <http://virtualhome.esfi.org> to learn more about home electrical safety.

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## Power Savers program incentives available

As a directive from the state legislature, Red Lake Electric Cooperative (RLEC) must spend money on conservation programs that yield electric (7911001.03 Orville Brinkman) energy savings. Energy conserved must equal 1.5 percent of the Cooperative's total annual kilowatt hour sales.

To help meet this directive the Cooperative is offering Power Savers.

Residential offerings span from a \$2 rebate on compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) to \$400 per ton on a geothermal, closed loop heat pump.

Business incentives apply for lighting, air conditioning, air

source heat pumps, geothermal heat pumps, chillers, motors, variable frequency drives, and Energy Star food service equipment.

Rebate forms that list the offerings are posted on RLEC website, [www.redlakeelectric.com](http://www.redlakeelectric.com).

The forms are also available


from the Cooperative or local electrical and heating/cooling contractors.

The accompanying tables list many of the incentives.

Custom applications may also apply to business customers. Most energy conservation measures can

be explored to see if the measure qualifies for an incentive.


For additional information, contact RLEC at 253-2168 or 800-245-6068.



# 2011 Incentive Summary


## Business Incentives – Retrofit Lighting

<b>Lighting – Retrofit</b> <i>(Unless noted, must be used for lighting with a minimum of 1,800 hours of operation per year)</i>		
<b>Fluorescent T8 Lamps with Electronic Ballasts</b>		
<b>T8 4ft. Fixture</b>		
1-lamp	\$5/unit	Replace incandescent or T12 systems with T8 systems. Replacement must result in energy savings to qualify.
2-lamp	\$6/unit	
3-lamp	\$11/unit	
4-lamp	\$13/unit	
<b>T8 8ft. Fixture</b>		
1-lamp	\$7/unit	Retrofits of T12 8" 2-lamp fixtures with four T8 4" lamps placed end to end should be considered a T8 4" 4-lamp retrofit at \$13.00.
2-lamp	\$9/unit	
<b>T8 8ft. High Output Fixture</b>		
1-lamp	\$12/unit	Retrofits of T12HO 8" 2-lamp fixtures with four T8 4" lamps placed end to end should be considered a T8 4" 4-lamp retrofit at \$13.00.
2-lamp	\$16/unit	
<b>Reduced Wattage Fluorescent T8 Lamps Only</b>		
4ft. 28W or Less 8ft. 54W or Less	\$50/lamp	Replace existing 32W 4" or 50W 8" T8 lamps with low watt T8 lamps.
<b>Reduced Wattage T8 Fluorescent Systems (CEE Qualified Only)</b>		
<b>T8 4ft. Reduced Wattage System</b>		
1-lamp	\$7/unit	Replace incandescent or T12 systems with T8 and 25 watt CEE Qualified Reduced Wattage T8 Systems. Lamps and ballasts used must meet the CEE specifications for Reduced Wattage T8 Systems.
2-lamp	\$9/unit	
3-lamp	\$13.50/unit	
4-lamp	\$18/unit	
<i>Incentive shown includes low wattage fluorescent lamp incentive of \$0.50 per lamp. Replacement fixtures or lamp and ballast retrofits are eligible.</i>		
<i>See "Commercial Lighting" at <a href="http://www.cee.org">www.cee.org</a> for approved lamp and ballast list. However if the ballast has a NEMA premium label it automatically qualifies.</i>		
<b>High Performance (Super) T8 Fluorescent Systems (CEE Qualified Only)</b>		
<b>T8 4ft. High Performance</b>		
1-lamp	\$6/unit	Replace incandescent, T12 systems, or specified standard T8 systems with CEE Qualified High Performance (super) T8 systems.
2-lamp	\$7/unit	
3-lamp	\$12/unit	
4-lamp	\$14/unit	
		Lamps and ballasts used must meet the CEE specifications for High Performance T8 Systems.
		Replacement fixtures or lamp and ballast retrofits are eligible.
<b>T8 4ft. High Performance – Replacing specific fixtures</b>		
2-lamp	\$8/unit	Replacing T12 8" one lamp fixture – one for one replacement only.
2-lamp	\$20/unit	
4-lamp	\$16/unit	Replacing T12HO 8" one lamp fixture – one for one replacement only.
4-lamp	\$30/unit	
4-lamp	\$30/unit	
<i>High Performance (super) T8 systems require manufacturer and model number for ballast and lamps used. Both ballast and lamp must be from CEE approved list to qualify.</i>		
<b>T8 High-Bay Fluorescent Fixtures with T8 lamps and Electronic Ballasts</b>		
<i>One for one replacement only. Only when replacing specific wattage HID (Metal Halide, Mercury Vapor and High Pressure Sodium) or Incandescent Fixtures.</i>		
<b>High-Bay T8 Fixtures 4 ft. Lamps</b>		
3-lamp	\$45/unit	Replacing 150 Watt or larger
4-lamp	\$70/unit	Replacing 250 Watt or larger
6-lamp	\$85/unit	Replacing 400 Watt to 749 Watt
6-lamp	\$120/unit	Replacing 750 Watt or larger
8-lamp	\$70/unit	Replacing 400 Watt to 749 Watt
8-lamp	\$100/unit	Replacing 750 Watt or larger
10-lamp	\$150/unit	Replacing 1,000 Watt or larger.
12-lamp	\$140/unit	Replacing 1,000 Watt or larger
16-lamp	\$120/unit	One 16-lamp or two 8-lamp replacing 1,000 Watt or larger
<i>See approved list at <a href="http://www.cee.org">www.cee.org</a>, under Commercial Lighting. However if the ballast has a NEMA premium label it automatically qualifies.</i>		



# Power SAVERS

Working together to save energy



## 2011 Incentive Summary

### Business Lighting Incentives –New Construction

#### Lighting - New Construction

*(Unless noted, must be used for lighting with a minimum of 1,800 hours of operation per year)*

#### High Performance (Super) T8 Fluorescent Systems (CEE Qualified Only)

T8 4ft. High Performance		
1-lamp	\$6/unit	Both ballasts and lamp must be from CEE approved list and meet the CEE specifications for High Performance T8 Systems in order to qualify.
2-lamp	\$7/unit	
3-lamp	\$12/unit	
4-lamp	\$14/unit	

#### Low-Wattage T8 Fluorescent Systems

T8 4ft. Low Wattage 25W and 28W Systems		
1-lamp	\$6/unit	Lamps and ballasts must meet the CEE specifications for High Performance T8 Systems.
2-lamp	\$7/unit	
3-lamp	\$12/unit	
4-lamp	\$14/unit	

#### T8 High-Bay Fluorescent Fixtures with T8 Lamps and Electronic Ballasts

High-Bay T8 Fixtures – 4 ft. Lamps		
3-lamp	\$45/unit	Install T8 fluorescent high-bay fixtures using recommendations from lighting professionals that use lighting design software to match the most efficient design to actual lighting needs.
4-lamp	\$70/unit	
6-lamp	\$85/unit	
8-lamp	\$100/unit	
		Typically used instead of pulse start metal halide fixtures.

See "Commercial Lighting" at [www.cee.org](http://www.cee.org) for approved lamp and ballast list. However if the ballast has a NEMA premium label it automatically qualifies.

#### TSHO High-Bay Fluorescent Fixtures with T5 High Output Lamps and Electronic Ballasts

TSHO 4 ft. High-Bay Fixtures		
3-lamp	\$70/unit	Install TSHO high-bay fixtures using recommendations from lighting professionals that use lighting design software to match the most efficient design to actual lighting needs.
4-lamp	\$90/unit	
6-lamp	\$125/unit	
		Typically used instead of pulse start metal halide fixtures.

*All fluorescent fixtures must utilize electronic ballasts and T8 or T5 lamps. Ballasts shall have a power factor greater than 90%. Harmonic distortion of ballasts shall not exceed 20%. For 8-foot fluorescent ballasts, the total harmonic distortion shall not exceed 30%.*

#### LED and Induction Fixtures

LED or Induction Fixtures (Garage or Exterior use)		
75 W – 104W fixture with equivalent light output to 125W – 175W or greater HID fixture	\$80/unit	LED garage and exterior fixtures should have a minimum efficiency of 35 lumens per watt.
105W – 149W with equivalent light output to 175W – 249W or greater HID fixture	\$100/unit	
150W – 240W with equivalent light output to 250W – 400W or greater HID fixture	\$120/unit	LED and Induction Technology must be complete fixtures with a total power reduction of 40% or more, compared to equivalent light output HID's.
Exterior Use Only 450W – 600W with equivalent light output to 750W – 1,000W or greater HID Fixture	\$225/unit	

2011 Incentive Summary			
Residential Incentives			
Lighting and Appliances			
CFL Lamps			
Replace incandescent bulbs with Energy Star compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs)		\$2/bulb	<b>Maximum 12 CFLs/customer</b>
Programmable Thermostat			
		\$25/unit	
Clothes Washer			
Energy Star		\$50/unit	
Electric Water Heater			
Minimum 80 gallon total capacity, EF ≥0.91. Must be controlled under the utility's load management program		\$150/unit	
Heating, Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) Measures			
Air Source (ASHP)			
Energy Star or 14.0 SEER / 8.25 HSPF		\$250/unit	
Supplemental heating source for ASHP			
Must modulate to allow Energy Star rated ASHP to operate down to 5°F, and be on load control		\$500/unit	
Furnace (Air Handler) with ECM blower			
Furnace with ECM blower		\$150	
Mini Split/Ductless ASHP			
15 SEER		\$500	
<i>New furnace/indoor unit installations. All efficiency ratings will be verified using the AHRI database (<a href="http://ahridirectory.org">ahridirectory.org</a>).</i>			
Geothermal			
Open Loop			
<135,000 BTUH @ 59°F	16.2 EER / 3.6 COP	\$200/ton	<b>Maximum incentive \$2,500/home</b>
Closed Loop			
<135,000 BTUH @ 77°F	14.1 EER / 3.3 COP	\$400/ton	<b>Maximum incentive \$5,000/home</b>
<i>All efficiency ratings will be verified using the AHRI database (<a href="http://ahridirectory.org">ahridirectory.org</a>).</i>			
<i>Units must meet or exceed above efficiency levels or carry an Energy Star qualification.</i>			
<i>Requires a heat load calculation to be submitted. Incentive is based off total heating capacity for the home.</i>			
<i>If equipped with backup electric heat, home must be on load control or demand billing per local utility offerings.</i>			
<i>Water-to-water systems need the manufacturer's specifications indicating the equipment meets incentive requirements.</i>			
Replacement Geothermal			
Open Loop			
<135,000 BTUH @ 59°F	16.2 EER / 3.6 COP	\$100/ton	<b>Maximum incentive \$1,250/home</b>
Closed Loop			
<135,000 BTUH @ 77°F	14.1 EER / 3.3 COP	\$200/ton	<b>Maximum incentive \$2,500/home</b>
<i>Incentive available for failed geothermal equipment only.</i>			
<i>Entire indoor unit replacement is required to receive incentive. Replacing only the compressor will not qualify for the incentive.</i>			
<i>Equipment must meet or exceed efficiency requirements.</i>			
<i>Equipment being replaced must fall outside of any warranty period to receive incentive. Requires a heat load calculation to be submitted clearly delineating design temperature used for analysis, resulting heat loss, and equipment heating capacity for the home.</i>			
<i>If equipped with backup electric heat, home must be on load control or demand billing per local utility offerings.</i>			





## Manager's Comments

by Roger Johanneck



## May is National Electrical Safety Month

Since about first grade, May has been a favorite month of mine. The month of May ushered in the end of another school year and the beginning of summer with all of its possibilities, freedom and fun. The start of another fishing season also adds to my fondness for the month of May. May is also a popular month to raise awareness and promote important causes like Electrical Safety.

I thought that the electric industry had long ago put in a reservation for the month of May to claim it as theirs for promoting electrical safety. Contrary to fishing laws regulating the number of fish you can keep, there appears to be no limits placed on the number of ideals you can promote in a given month. A brief look on the internet shows there are quite a few organizations that want to promote something that claim May as their month, for example: National Military Appreciation Month, National Lupus Awareness Month, National Building Safety Month, Smile Month, Bike Month, Foster Care Month and a host of others all claim May as their month.

So why do we in the electric business (2019001.07 Bryan L. Olson) dedicate the month of May and devote time and resources to promote electrical safety? Perhaps the answer is too obvious, but I will repeat it anyways; so no one gets hurt.

As I think about electrical safety, I recall a safety lesson learned early in life from my instructor in a firearms safety training course. The instructor, standing in front of the classroom full of 12 year olds while holding a rifle stated; "A gun is one of the safest things a person can own." The lesson "never point a gun at anyone" was explained by the safety instructor telling us he could fire the gun in a million different directions in this classroom full of students and no one would get hurt.

Our daily life around and use of electricity, to me, is a lot like the

lesson I learned in firearms safety training. If we are not careful with electricity it has the power to hurt, sometimes fatally. We can however, use electricity safely in an endless number of ways. When we don't take short cuts in how we use it, work with it or around it, no one gets hurt.

Even though May is the time set aside nationally to bring electrical safety awareness to the forefront, we know that electrical safety is something to be practiced always, not just each May.

At Red Lake Electric Cooperative we place a high priority on electrical safety by having our employees participate in regular safety training sessions through our statewide association, the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), through an independent safety consultant, Minnesota Safety and through continuing education courses. These keep our employees properly trained to do the work they are called on to do, safely.

Part of each training session covers a review of accidents or near misses that have happened in our industry. The old adage, "learn from the mistakes of others", certainly applies with the practice of doing an accident review. Unfortunately, it seems the instructors continue to find new incidents to review. These serve as another reminder as to why we dedicate the month of May to electrical safety and the continuation of our electrical safety program for our employees. We need to keep safety on the forefront of our decision making so that it becomes a part of our culture at home, at work and at play.

I thought it would be helpful if I did an accident review with you. I will share some insurance claim examples of public electric contacts with power lines, provided by our insurer, Federated Rural Electric Insurance (FREI). Annually there is an average of 400 electrocutions in the U.S.

• Contact by roofer with ladder – burns to hand and feet.

• Man was unloading a 20 foot piece of rebar from a truck and made contact with overhead power line – FATALITY.

• Residential painting contractor's ladder fell into overhead line – FATALITY

• Single vehicle accident where claimant's vehicle left roadway and struck insured's utility pole. Driver exited vehicle and made contact with the energized line – minor injuries.

• Raised irrigation pipe into overhead line – FATALITY.

• Farmer came in contact with overhead line – FATALITY.

• Foreman made contact with and underground line while boring a pipeline – FATALITY

All of the incidents listed above, like most electrical accidents, could have been avoided. This is both a sad and comforting fact; sad in the sense of that they didn't need to happen, comforting in the sense that by thinking safety, electrical accidents are avoidable, not inevitable. As our insurer, FREI aptly states: "Statistics on public contact related deaths and injuries are simply inadequate to describe the impact that electrical accidents have on people, their families, friends, and communities."

I will leave you with two points to remember here: there is a limit on walleyes, but there is no limit on the attention that electrical safety deserves; remember to practice electrical safety - always.

## Electrical safety tips from the U.S. Department of Labor

• Assume that all overhead wires are energized at lethal voltages. Never assume that a wire is safe to touch, even if it is down or appears to be insulated.

• Call Red Lake Electric Cooperative immediately to report fallen electrical wires.

• If you are working at heights (on a roof top) or moving long objects (grain elevator), survey the area before starting work for the presence of overhead wires.

• If an overhead wire falls across your vehicle while you are driving, stay in your vehicle and continue to drive away from the line.

• If an overhead wire falls across your vehicle and the vehicle stalls, do not leave your vehicle. Warn



## Report from the Office

by Shirley Bregier

I think spring is finally here! It is nice to see the sun shining, the farmers in the fields planting their crop, and boats and campers being moved to the favorite fishing spot.

### Budget Billing

It's that time of the year when we start the new budget bill term. For those of you on budget billing already, remember that your new budget amount for the upcoming 12 months will reflect the rate increase that recently went into effect.

If you aren't already enrolled in budget billing and have a hard time budgeting your electric bill payments around what the weather may or may not be doing, you may be the person that is interested in budget billing.

Red Lake Electric offers our residential customers a service to even out (5823005.03 Daniel Page) your electric bills for the year, sparing you from unpredictable bills that are caused from seasonal variations. Budget billing does not reduce your energy expense, it simply averages your energy expense over a 12-month period.

To qualify for budget billing, you must have been a customer for the past 12 months and your account needs to be current. Your usage for the previous 12 months will be averaged and calculated based on the current electric rate to get your monthly budget payment.

Red Lake Electric starts the budget billing program in May of each year so throughout the summer you start building a credit balance. That way when the larger bills arrive with the cold next winter, you have an amount built up to help even out the larger bills.

We'll review your budget plan every six months to compare your actual energy usage costs to your budget amount. If there's a significant difference, we'll adjust your monthly budget amount up or down accordingly.

Your monthly electric bill will continue to show your actual usage as (2824004.04 David Helm) well as your budget amount to allow you to also monitor your electric bill. If at any time you notice a significant difference in the amount you are paying and your actual balance owing, you can call or e-mail the office to have us look at your account information and reevaluate your budget amount. Keep in mind that we normally want you to build up a credit over the summer months to help pay for the higher electric bills during the winter months.

### Web Site

Red Lake Electric's web site has been updated! The look of [www.redlakeelectric.com](http://www.redlakeelectric.com) hasn't changed drastically. What has

changed is the ease of navigating around the site. The drop down menus make it easier to make your selection. A search engine has been added so you will be able to search our site to help find information easier. The biggest change for RLEC is the ease to maintain the site so we will be able to keep you better informed.

If there is something you would like to see on our site or a link you would like added, please let me know. For those that haven't used our site yet, give it a try. We will be adding new features as time allows so continue to check us out.

As always, if you have a comment or concern you can either e-mail us at [redlake@minnkota.com](mailto:redlake@minnkota.com) or call our billing office at 218-253-2168 or 1-800-245-6068. Till next time, enjoy the nice weather and whether it be farming, fishing, biking or whatever you like to do outdoors - Remember SAFETY FIRST!

### Closed Memorial Day

In respectful remembrance, Red Lake Electric Cooperative's headquarter facilities will be closed Monday, May 30 in observance of Memorial Day.

In case of an electrical outage or emergency, dial the after-hour phone number 218-253-2200.

May we all remember those who have gone before us, especially those who have sacrificed their lives for our freedom.

## Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.

One of the Minnkota Power Systems

# Things you should know about your electric service

### BILLINGS AND COLLECTION

You will receive your energy bill on or near the 20th of each month.

You may pay your bill in person at RLEC during office hours, use the 24-hour drive-up drop box located next to the RLEC office, by Auto Pay, or by mail. Payment must be in the office, drop box, Auto Pay, or in the mail, as evidenced by the postmark, by the 5th day of the following month to avoid a late payment charge. A 1 1/2% monthly late payment charge will be computed on delinquent energy bills, the minimum late payment charge will be \$1.00.

If your payment is not received by the 15th of the month, a final notice of disconnection statement will be included on your following bill. The final notice statement will notify you when your electric service will be disconnected if the delinquent amount remains unpaid. If an employee is sent to disconnect your electric service, a \$50 collection fee will be charged to your account, even if you pay the collector.

To have a disconnected service reconnected, all amounts owing, a \$50 reconnection fee, and a security deposit must be paid. If the service must be reconnected after normal working hours, a \$100 reconnection fee must be paid.

### METER TESTS

RLEC has a schedule in place to have its meters periodically tested for accuracy. Results from these tests show that meters generally slow down with age; however, if you think that your meter is recording too much usage, RLEC will test it for accuracy. You must pay a test fee in advance of the test. If the meter test shows that the meter was inaccurate, the test fee will be refunded to you.

### STOPPED METERS

If you find your meter has stopped and you are using electricity, please contact the office immediately so we can replace it. Average consumption will be billed to the member for the time the meter was stopped so there is no advantage in not reporting a stopped meter.

### METER READINGS

An automated meter reading system is utilized to obtain monthly meter readings. Although the system is normally reliable, there is always a chance that the correct reading has not been transmitted to the office for billing. Customers should periodically read their meter and compare it to the reading on the billing statement. If the actual reading is not close to the billing statement reading, please call the office.

### GENERAL SERVICE RATES

Facilities charge variable	\$24 to \$31 month
First 500 KWH	..... .9¢ Kwh
Over 500 KWH (April-Dec.)	..... .8¢ Kwh
Over 500 KWH (Jan.-Mar.)	..... .9.1¢ Kwh

Multiphase users add \$20/month cost of service charge.

Standby, \$12/month (meter disconnected but the power line retained; standby is not available on services larger than 15 KVA transformer capacity).

Security light, \$7/month, high pressure sodium, \$8/month, mercury vapor; water heater flat credit, \$7/month (on January-April billing); off-peak equipment charge, \$5/month per heat meter; off-peak electric heat rate, 4.7¢/kWh long-term control, 7¢/kWh short-term control.

### BAD CHECKS

A \$15 charge will be levied each time a check is returned because of nonsufficient funds, account being closed or payment stopped.

### OUTAGES

In case your electricity goes out, please do the following:

1. Check your fuses or breakers at the yard pole or meter pedestal.
2. Call your neighbor to see if they are out of electricity also.
3. Call the RLEC office (218-253-2168 or 1-800-245-6068) during working hours or 218-253-2200 after hours. We will accept collect calls for outages only.

## Mission Statement

It is the mission of Red Lake Electric Cooperative to enhance the quality of life for people of our service area by consistently providing quality electric service and other valued services while holding our employees, our community and our environment in high regard.

### Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.

One of the Minnkota Power Systems

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## WE PROUDLY PRESENT TO YOU

### The Red Lake Electric Cooperative

# Customer Service Guarantee

It's short and simple! Red Lake Electric Cooperative employees will meet or exceed your expectations of friendly, courteous service and will meet any commitments they make to you. If your expectations of the service provided by our employees is not met, please contact me at the Red Lake Electric Cooperative office, 253-2168. You will receive \$5.00 for your inconvenience and our promise to serve you better in the future. Our employees' commitment to quality customer service makes this guarantee possible.

### Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.

One of the Minnkota Power Systems

ROGER JOHANNECK  
General Manager

## RED LAKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, Inc.

# VOLTS & JOLTS

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Subscription Rate .....\$2.50 per year

## NOTICE

Hidden within the text of the articles on pages 1, 2, 3 and the back page of this issue of the Volts & Jolts are the names and account numbers of five RLEC members. They will appear within the articles in parenthesis as such (99-99-99-999-99 Roger P. Member). If you find your name and account number, clip it out and send it with your next payment. You will be credited with \$5 on your electric bill.



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VOLTS AND JOLTS FEATURE OF THE MONTH

Westend Garden Center in third year of growth

Pam and Doug Dallmann have enjoyed creating planting gardens at their home near Thief River Falls for many years. "Doug does the building and helps with the planting," commented Pam about her husband. "If it weren't a joint effort, we wouldn't be able to do it."

This activity, among many others that couple embarks upon, helps to create a beautiful yard that is the enjoyment of visitors who are given the garden tour at the Dallmann home. The array of plants and decorations also enhances the atmosphere around the church they moved to the property and renovated a couple years back. The structure and grounds have been used for the occasional wedding celebration.

About three years ago, Pam had the idea of doing more with plants and providing an opportunity for others to enjoy one of her favorite pastimes. A site was cleared in the parking lot area of Universal Screenprint on Highway 59 north in Thief River Falls. Universal Screenprint is a commercial screen printing and graphics company started by the Dallmann's almost 25 years ago.

Upon the cleared site, a greenhouse was erected and soon truckloads of annual and perennial plants arrived to be sorted, tagged and arranged in the greenhouses for sale to the general public. With room needed for potting and other greenhouse work, along with the large inventory of plants, it was determined that operations in year two would require the addition of another greenhouse.

One greenhouse is used for annuals and the

Pam Dallmann, owner of Westend Garden Center of Thief River Falls, stands in the annual plant greenhouse, one of two greenhouses and a nursery open for business on Highway 59 north.

other for perennials, with a little overflow each way.

Each greenhouse is regulated by large vents that close thermostatically. Electric heaters keep the temperature stable while the vents purge the

excess. The greenhouses are attractively finished and are adorned with graphics and signage from Universal Screenprint making the two entities natural partners.

Each year, Pam adds more of the popular varieties of plants and gives advice on where to plant and how to maintain the greenery. This year, the Dallmann's have added a fenced area, a tree and shrub nursery complete with a patio for customers to sit a spell while contemplating which plants to buy.

On occasion, Pam has had customers bring in their large decorator pots for new plantings. She picks the plants and arranges them to suit the customers needs and color preferences.

She can order in what she doesn't have or for special requests and enjoys catering to the customers needs. With other irons in the fire, Pam employs up to four part-time workers to assist with potting and helping the patrons every day of the week during the busy season.

A wide variety of flowering plants, succulents, grasses and bog plants can be found at Westend Gardens and now, with the addition of trees and shrubs, it has become a destination for any level of gardener to secure the types of plants they desire.

A lot of plant and planting knowledge acquired over the years is energetically imparted to customers in order to help them be successful with the plants and gardening. "Placement, location, and proper care are key," added Pam.

When asked about her involvement in garden plants and now trees and shrubs and working with customers, Pam simply stated, "I enjoy it. I really do enjoy it."

The tree and shrub nursery is the latest addition to the Westend Garden Center owned and operated by Pam Dallmann of Thief River Falls.

A rustic and well-used wheel barrow does not escape the creativity of Pam Dallmann of Westend Garden Center. It can be found decorating the entrance to the annual plant greenhouse.

A wide array of flowering plants, grasses and bog plants are housed in the perennial greenhouse at Westend Garden Center in Thief River Falls.

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Line upgraded for bin service

A single-phase line along County Road 13 in Parnell Township northeast of Crookston was recently upgraded to a three-phase line for a new grain bin/dryer service.

Three miles of overhead line were upgraded and one mile of

underground will be installed to provide the three-phase service.

This will be the third consecutive construction season for Red Lake Electric Cooperative to build or rebuild lines for new or larger grain handling services.



Brett Knott, apprentice lineman, attaches a crossarm to an existing single-phase pole. The poles along County Road 13 in Parnell Township were all replaced four years ago and are of sufficient height to accomodate a three-phase line.



Above: A Red Lake Electric construction crew strings wire for the three-phase line upgrade along County Road 13 northeast of Crookston. A track dozer was used to pull trucks through the wet fields.

Right: Red Lake Electric lineman work to "tie-in" the wires for the three-phase line upgrade.



Surge protection: critical for sensitive electronics

Computers and other electronic equipment found in nearly every home and business today are quite susceptible to sags and surges in voltage and current. They may show up as minor voltage spikes, short power interruptions or current distortions that are difficult to find, even if you know where to look. Dealing with power quality concerns requires an understanding of surge protection equipment and a plan to protect sensitive electronic devices.

Lightning strikes to homes or nearby locations are one primary cause of damage to delicate electronic equipment. Other causes like voltage spikes and multiple grounding paths can also create problems. Even minor surges can

create a malfunction that requires the device to reset or possibly even cause permanent damage.

The surge protection system outlined in this article could apply to nearly any residential or commercial setting, as well as agricultural buildings.

A properly installed transient surge suppression system includes multiple levels of protection. Beginning at the site of the utility service entrance, protection is provided through each of the building's service panels, subpanels and individual circuits that supply electricity to delicate equipment. Each level of protection is designed to remove a portion of the surge not eliminated by the preceding level.

The last level of protection is

provided at the individual circuit. This is where the lowest level of harmful disturbances will be filtered out. An outlet strip with a quality surge suppressor provides this protection.

In practice, many buildings won't need all the levels of protection. But providing protection only at the circuit level is not sufficient to guard against high-energy transient surges.

Should the building contain critical electronics that are affected by any change in current or voltage levels, the best is to provide protection at all levels.

As a minimum level of protection, experts recommend the following components be included in any surge protection system:

- Lightning arrestor on the main service pole (this is already provided by RLEC).
  - Adequate grounding for service entrance and main service pole.
  - Surge suppressor for the building electrical service panel.
  - Secondary arrestor for the individual circuit to which the electronic equipment is attached.
- To learn more contact Red Lake Electric Cooperative or your local electrician. Remember, no amount of surge protection will guarantee absolute reliability. But by understanding the causes of power quality problems and the components needed in a well-designed protection system, you will be able to avoid most costly losses in equipment and income.

Surge protection equipment available at Red Lake Electric Cooperative

Meter-base Surge Suppressor unit (owned, installed and maintained by RLEC)	\$3.95/month
Entrance Panel Surge Suppressor (must be wired into entrance panel by electrician)	\$119
3 AC Plugstrip with Coax and Phone Line Protection (this is an individual circuit suppressor)	\$49
2 AC Wall Mount Suppressors with Phone Line Protection (this unit mounts on a wall outlet)	\$39

From the Mail Bag

**Dear RLEC:**

Just wanted to let you know how much we appreciate your quick response to our call when we were out of power.

We were thankful to be able to get a hold of you so easily after hours, and for the after hours workers.

Thank you so much for all your hard work.

**Gary and Jan Leader**  
Newfolden

**Dear RLEC:**

Thank you very much for the \$50 gift of credit on the electric bill.

**Judy Sorter**  
Thief River Falls

**Tammie Malwitz**  
Community Nutrition Educator, University of Minnesota Extension

**Dear RLEC:**

Thank you for helping us with providing wonderful door prizes for the many families who attended our annual Block Party health fair.

**ECFE and HeadStart**  
Oklee/Plummer

**Dear RLE Operation Round-Up:**

Thanks for helping us provide prizes to the families that attended our annual Family Fair in Red Lake

Falls. Each year we try to purchase items that would be useful and fun for the families to use at home.

**Margaret and Wanda**  
Red Lake Falls ECFE

**Dear RLEC:**

Thank you for the donation toward the Marshall County Central After Prom Party.

**MCC students**

**Dear RLEC:**

Thank you for your donation to out RLCC Post Prom Party. We had a great time. Thanks for helping make it all possible.

**RLCC students**

**Dear RLEC:**

Thank you so much for all of the support in helping to make the 2011 Win-E-Mac After Prom Party a success. Many great memories have been made.

**Win-E-Mac students**

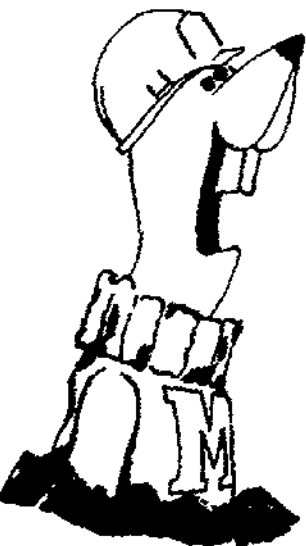
**Dear RLEC:**

We would like to thank you for your generous donation to the Goodridge Post Prom Party. Your contribution helped make the 2011 Post Prom Party a huge success. We all had a wonderful time.

**Goodridge students**

Call Before You Dig

With the arrival of spring, many people have plans for excavating and planting projects. To ensure your safety and the safety of others, before digging or planting, call Gopher State One Call, 1-800-252-1166.



Red Lake Electric Cooperative members and area contractors are reminded, if you are planning to dig deeper than one foot, you must call Gopher State One Call – it's the law!

A call to Gopher State will get all utility underground lines and pipes located and marked, free of charge, within 48 hours.

Don't take chances – mistakes cost lives.  
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**Dear RLEC:**

Just a word of appreciation for the waffle iron that I won at the annual meeting.

**Wally Reiersen**  
Thief River Falls

**Dear RLEC:**

On behalf of the clients of Sun-view Dining Center in Red Lake Falls, I want to thank you for your donation of milk that was left after the annual meeting. All donations are appreciated and help with our food costs.

**Sincerely,**  
**Margaret Schindler**  
Dining Manager

**Dear RLEC:**

Thank you for the grant you gave to the Strandquist Food Shelf to buy food.

**Gula Stromgren**  
Food Shelf Director

**Dear RLE Trust:**

Thank you so much for your generous donation to the Nutrition Education Program/4-H After School Programs. These funds have allowed me to purchase exercise and healthy eating incentives. The students love the jump ropes.

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Brett Knott places an insulated blanket over a lightning arrester and epoxilator as he prepares to work on the three-phase pole. Covering this phase helps protect him from different potentials as he will be working on one of the other phases.



A line construction crew works on a new three-phase breaker pole and de-frames the old single-phase pole.

Burning garbage in the backyard

By Kayla Bromelkamp, Minn. Pollution Control Agency

The answer is that garbage has changed in the last 50 years. Today's garbage contains plastics and other synthetics that release a hazardous mixture of carcinogens and other toxics (such as lead, mercury, and arsenic) when burned.

Backyard garbage burning, whether done in a traditional burn barrel, wood stove, or fire-pit, is far more harmful to our health and our environment than previously thought. Even seemingly harmless items, like paper, mail, packaging, and cardboard boxes used for frozen pizzas and vegetables, can give off toxic emissions.

This pollution not only increases the health risk to those exposed to the smoke, which can increase the risk of heart disease and cause rashes, nausea, and headaches, but also produces toxic substances, including dioxin, a cancer-causing pollutant.

The U.S. EPA has determined that one burn barrel (from an average family of four) can produce as much or more dioxin as a full-scale municipal waste incinerator burning 200 tons per day. Backyard

garbage burning is now the single largest source of uncontrolled airborne dioxin emissions in the United States; more than all other known sources combined. In addition, backyard garbage burning contributes to nearly half of all of the wildfires in Minnesota each year.

Regardless of whether or not it is legal or illegal, the most important thing to understand is the risks associated with backyard garbage burning and to change behavior. Most counties in Minnesota have set up comprehensive waste and recycling collection programs and drop-off sites to properly manage our garbage but there are still parts of the state that don't offer convenient options for all rural residents. That is why the MPCA is working with local units of government and other interested groups to close those gaps and educate people about the real dangers posed by backyard garbage burning.

For more information, including links to local waste-hauling services, drop sites, and recycling options, go to <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/burnbarrel>.



Casey Thronson, left, lineman, and Brett Knott work to complete the attachments on the three-phase breaker pole. A breaker isolates a section of line so if a fault occurs down-line it will open the breaker allowing electric service to remain for services up-line.

Agassiz Refuge Lost Bay Habitat Drive opens

Load your family in the car and head to Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge to experience the sights and sounds of spring that nature has to offer.

Observe up to 17 species of ducks that breed on the Refuge, take a close look at a bald eagle perched in her nest incubating eggs, or listen for the "winnowing" of Wilson's snipe as they descend from the sky in courtship display.

Visitors can also expect to hear the excited calls of the Franklin's gulls from their large nesting colony in Agassiz Pool or as small groups sail overhead on foraging flights, as well as the familiar honks of Canada geese, and various melodies coming from upland habitats as migrating songbirds arrive at the Refuge.

While a smorgasbord of birds is a given, lucky Refuge visitors get a glimpse of moose, bear, or wolves. There's never a dull moment in nature.

You can experience all this activity not only as you drive towards Refuge headquarters along



County Highway 7, but also along the Refuge's 4-mile long Lost Bay Habitat Drive which is now open. That Habitat

Drive offers new interpretive signage, including three sound stations where you can listen to pre-recorded narration about the Refuge's wildlife, habitat, and management activities, by tuning your car radio to 1610AM.

If you want to take in more of the fresh spring air, take a jaunt down one of the three hiking trails also available at the Refuge. Whether in your car or on foot, you won't be disappointed in the splendors of spring at Agassiz NWR.

The Refuge Headquarters is located on Marshall County Road 7 (290th Street NE), 12 miles north of Thief River Falls on Highway 32 and 11 miles east of Holt. A sign along Minnesota Highway 1, three miles east of Thief River Falls, also guides visitors to the Refuge.

For more information call the Refuge office at 218-449-4115, extension 203.

Top dairy herds for April DHIA

Randy Rasmussen, supervisor of the Red Lake-Pennington DHIA, put the following herds at top 10 in the association for April.

Name	Cows	% in milk	lbs. milk	test	lbs. fat	protein	lbs. protein
Kara-Kesh Holsteins	.....5	100	78	3.4	2.7	2.8	2.2
Northstar Dairy LLC	.....1105	91	76	3.5	2.7	3.1	2.4
Wayra Dairy 3X	.....282	91	75	3.4	2.5	2.9	2.2
Spring Prairie Colony	.....372	87	74	3.9	2.9	3.0	2.2
Walter Bros Farm	.....352	87	70	3.5	2.5	3.0	2.1
Amundson Dairy	.....66	89	68	3.7	2.5	3.1	2.1
Robert & Terri Dahlen	.....55	84	61	3.4	2.1	3.0	1.8
BLY Dairy	.....254	89	60	4.0	2.4	3.2	1.9
CB Farms LLC	.....53	85	59	3.4	2.0	3.0	1.8
Beyer Bros Farm	.....75	89	58	3.6	2.1	3.1	1.8

The herd averages are affected by the number of dry cows in the herd. The amount of milk or butterfat is averaged out over all the cows. This gives the farmer a record of the earning power of the herd for the month. If too many cows are included in the herd, then the average for the month may be low, even though the cow that is milking produces a lot of milk.

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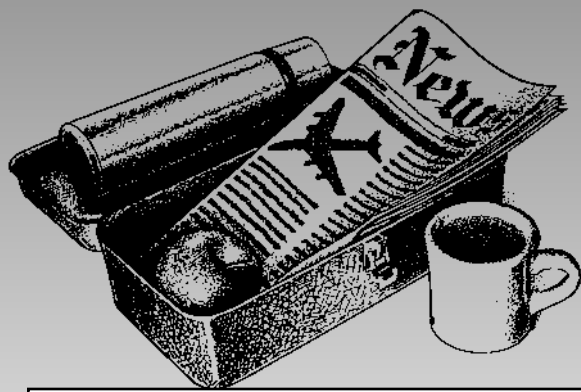
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