



APRIL 2017

# Volts & 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  
and a portion of the lands of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa

## Three incumbent directors re-elected at annual meeting

### Bonnie Christians

lives just north of Gentilly and has been a Red Lake Electric member for 45 years. She has a combined family of five children and 14 grandchildren.

Working with Stenshoel-Houske Funeral Home, Christians assists families with preplanning and prefunding funeral arrangements.

Additional part-time employment includes her work with New Horizons, providing services, including mediation, for people addressing issues of custody of minor children, parenting time schedules, divorce, division of marital assets and workplace conflict.

Christians completed her fifth term as a Red Lake Electric director and her sixth year serving as Board president.

"It has been an honor to be a part of



Bonnie Christians

such an outstanding Cooperative," Christians said. "I look forward to continuing my association and serving the members of Red Lake Electric."

**Steve Linder** is a native to the Oklee area and lives with his wife, Donna, on their farm north of Oklee. They have three children: Amber, Ben and Levi.

The Linders are engaged in grain farming, which includes raising wheat, soybeans and corn. During the winter months, Steve spends a good share of his time doing equipment maintenance in his farm shop.

Linder has served as a Red Lake Electric Cooperative director for 15 years. He also serves as president of the Red Lake County Farmers Union and is a supervi-



Steve Linder

sor on the Garnes Township Board.

"I find it very interesting to serve as a director of Red Lake Electric Cooperative," Linder said. "I will continue to do my best in serving the Cooperative and its members."

Linder is Red Lake Electric's representative on the (5536003.03 Randy Huot) Square Butte Electric Cooperative Board. Square Butte is the owner of the second coal-based power plant at the Milton R. Young Station near Center, N.D.

**Mark Hanson** lives east of Thief River Falls with his wife, Audrey. They have four children: Ehren, Seth, Ingrid and Kjell; and 11 grandchildren.

The Hansons are retired from their grain and cattle farming operation, which has been assumed by their son. Audrey is a retired registered nurse. They enjoy spending time at their lake cabin.

Hanson has served as a director of Red Lake Electric Cooperative for 12 years, currently serving as secretary/treasurer. He also serves as chairman of the Pennington County Township Officers Association and as clerk of Silverton Township. The Hansons are members of Evangelical Free Church of Thief River Falls.

"Electricity plays a vital role in everyone's life, whether in our work, our homes or in our recreation," Hanson said. "Much of the quality of life as we live it today relates directly to the use of electricity."

"I look forward to serving another three years as director of the Cooperative and thank the people of the district for their continued support," Hanson said.



Mark Hanson

## Help keep your power costs down

Careless ditch burning can destroy utility poles and junction boxes, leading to unnecessary power outages. Pole damage ranges from surface charring to destruction, and can be costly to landowners, depending on the location of the pole and the severity of the damage.

Please use extreme caution when burning around Red Lake Electric's electrical equipment, and always tend to a fire once it is lit. Let's all do our part to keep the lights on and unnecessary costs down.





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Colette Kujava, Steve Linder, Peter Mosbeck

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Steve Conely . . . . . Manager of Electric  
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Kelli Brateng . . . . . Manager of Member Services

## OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday  
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Phone: (218) 253-2168  
Toll-Free: 1-800-245-6068  
Fax: (218) 253-2630



## AFTER HOURS/OUTAGE CALLS 218-253-2200

Website: [www.redlakeelectric.com](http://www.redlakeelectric.com)  
Email: [redlake@minnkota.com](mailto:redlake@minnkota.com)

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## MINNESOTA STATE ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS

*Pennington and Marshall Counties:*  
**Scott Stenvik – 218-689-5406**

*Red Lake and Polk Counties:*  
**Bryan Holmes – 218-686-1413**

Any time you or an electrician does wiring or other electrical work at your home or farm, Minnesota state law requires a state wiring inspector to conduct a proper inspection of the work. A rough-in inspection must be made before any wiring is covered. A final inspection is also required. Please visit [www.dli.mn.gov](http://www.dli.mn.gov) for more information. The inspectors can be reached week-day mornings between 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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



# Manager's Comments

by Roger Johanneck



## Annual meeting

I want to thank the members and guests who attended the Cooperative's annual meeting March 29. Our plan was to take care of the business we are required to do at our annual meeting, yet keep the meeting short, informative and enjoyable. When we have a good crowd attending these Cooperative functions, it makes the work that we put into holding these meetings worthwhile. Based on what members told us so far, they appreciated the information presented at the meeting, the sit-down meal prepared by Oak Park Lutheran Church in Oklee, the music of Cathy Erickson band, the golf cart transportation from the parking lot to the arena and fellowship shared among the meeting goers. Thanks for joining us this day. Barring any unforeseen changes, we'll plan to meet again the last Wednesday in March 2018, for the Cooperative's 80<sup>th</sup> annual meeting!

## Look up – look around!

With the annual meeting behind us, we expect the warmer weather and all the field work that comes with it will soon follow. Hopefully cutting corners is not part of your plan as you prepare for the work ahead. Certainly favorable weather goes a long way in easing the pace at which field work is accomplished, but I remind you again to be cautious as you gear up for and plant your fields. Planting and harvest season is the time when accidents are more likely to happen, either people getting injured or property getting damaged. From 2007 to 2015, there has been an average of more than 18 contacts annually with Red Lake Electric's power lines, poles and equipment, mostly from agricultural equipment. In 2016, the 25 contacts were a (6335002.06 Rodney Johnson) decrease from 2015's high of 30 contacts; however, that number is concerning as well as a sizeable increase from the 10-year average.

Be sure to take time for a tailgate session with those who will be helping

you with your field work and discuss where overhead power lines, power line poles, anchors, electrical equipment such as pad transformers and other hazards are located. Just a few minutes can make a big difference for you, your family and co-workers.

As I have shared before, the Cooperative has about 40,000 power line poles and 18,000 anchors in place as part of the Cooperative's electric plant. Ground line transformers and junction boxes are also a part of the mix of equipment that pose as hazards when equipment is working the fields and moving about the farmyards. Please be mindful of this electrical equipment as you plan your work; a little extra care can go a long way toward saving time, damages and most importantly, injury.

## Patty Mickelson completes two terms as Trust Board director

At the Red Lake Electric Trust board meeting held in March, Patty Mickelson of Oklee finished the second of two three-year terms as director of the Red Lake Electric Trust Board; most recently serving as its secretary-treasurer. Because the Trust bylaws limit director terms to two consecutive three-year terms, Mickelson's time serving the Red Lake Electric Trust as a director is completed and she will be replaced with a new director prior to the Trust's upcoming September meeting. It was a privilege to serve on the Trust board with Patty, who during her tenure served for a time as president and vice president. Patty did a great job evaluating the Operation Round Up fund applications during her six-year tenure; her fairness to all the organizations seeking grants served the Trust board and the Cooperative members who participate in Operation Round Up well. Thanks again, Patty, for accepting the invitation to serve on the Trust board. I sincerely appreciate it.



Like us on Facebook at  
[www.facebook.com/redlakeelectric](http://www.facebook.com/redlakeelectric)



# Red Lake Electric offering electric vehicle rebates



**A**s part of their Value of Electricity campaign, participating Minnkota member cooperatives, including Red Lake Electric Cooperative, are offering new rebates to encourage the use of electric vehicles.

A \$50 per kilowatt (kW) incentive is offered following the installation of 240-volt Level 2 chargers on

direct load control. The average rebate per member will be \$330, with a maximum set at \$500 per account. Minnkota provides the electric vehicle program (1219002.02 Kermit & Hazel Magnuson) to each participating utility in its system. RLEC, in turn, incorporates the rebate with its own members.

Not only does the rebate support the adoption of all-electric and plug-in hybrid cars, it is designed for use with golf carts, motorcycles, forklifts, Zambonis and all other vehicles that require an electric charging station.

In addition to the rebate, having the charger on direct load control qualifies the consumer for the money-saving off-peak rate, which is 40 to 50 percent below the regular electric rate. According to a Department of Energy calculation, the average off-peak rate in the Minnkota system is equivalent to about 65-cent gasoline.

In exchange for the off-peak rate,

Minnkota can control the charging station's electrical use during on-peak hours, a strategy that helps manage the cooperative's power resources and interaction in the wholesale energy market.

There are three basic charging options for most electric vehicles. The charging times vary based on the vehicle and the charger setup.

*Charging options:*

- **Level 1 – 120 volts**

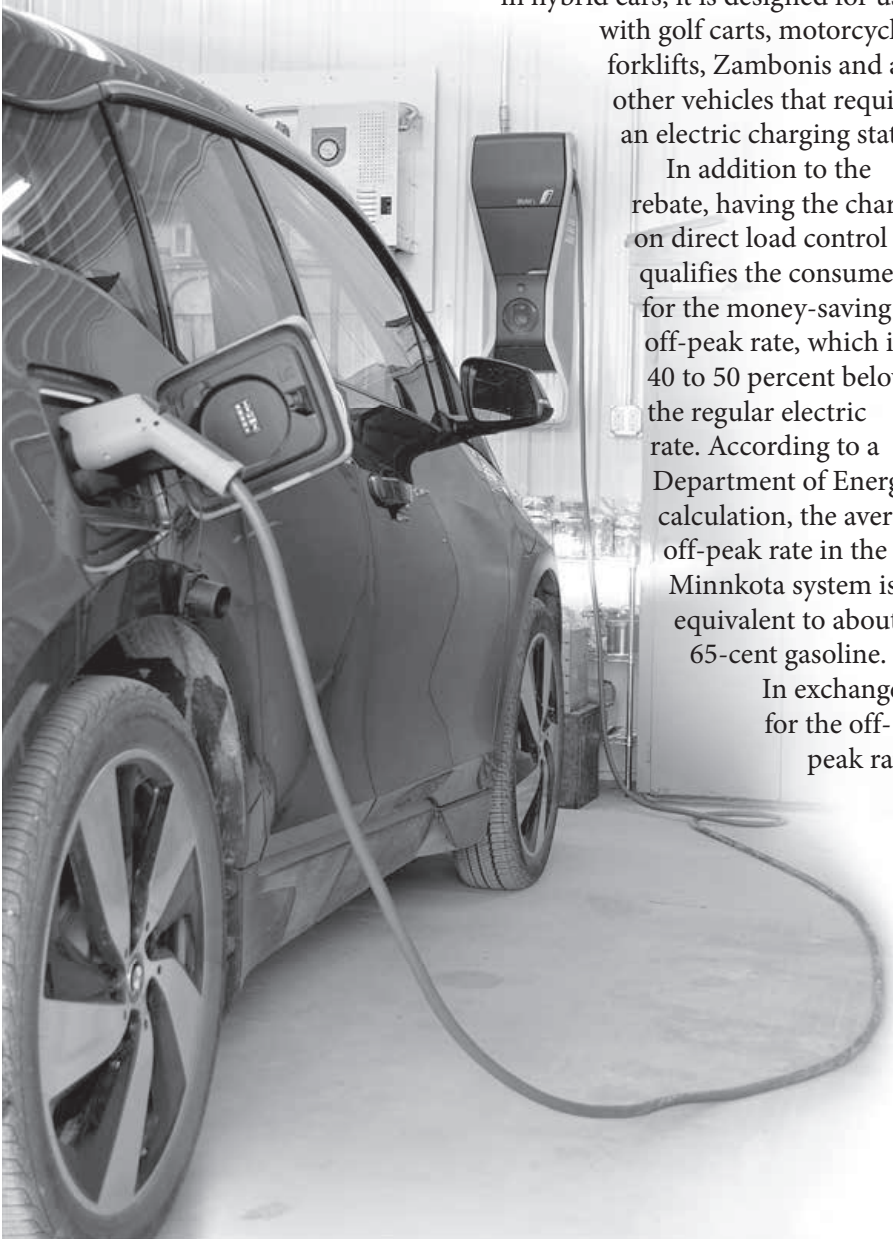
Charging a vehicle at Level 1 means plugging into a standard 120-volt outlet. All drivers can charge their electric vehicle at Level 1, although it takes significantly longer (10-20 hours) than other charging options.

- **Level 2 – 240 volts**

Using 240-volt service, a dead battery can be fully charged in approximately 2 to 4 hours. Some models can charge in as little as 30 minutes.

- **Direct Current (DC) Quick Charging**

This charging option is typically only available for public charging at gas stations or along major transportation corridors. On average, the DC charger can add 40 miles of range for every 10 minutes of charging.



**The first Level 2 electric vehicle charging station on Minnkota's demand response program was installed late last year. (Above) A 240-volt charging station (seen on far right) can fully charge a vehicle's battery in 2 to 4 hours.**

# Powerful Connections

The 79<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of Red Lake Electric Cooperative was held March 29 in the Imperial Room of the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls. The meeting was attended by approximately 250 Cooperative members and guests.

President Bonnie Christians called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. In her President's report, Christians noted that the Cooperative's annual meeting theme, "Powerful Connections," was fitting, as it reminds us of and recognizes the many important connections Red Lake Electric Cooperative has made throughout its 79-year history, and still values today in helping this Cooperative carry out its mission.

Christians went on to explain how one of those important connections this Cooperative has is with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the NRECA. Christians stated that this national network consists of nearly 900 rural electric cooperatives that provide power to more than 42 million (2814001.05 Travis Moen) members, covering 42 states and 75 percent of this country's landmass.

Christians thanked the membership for their attendance and then introduced a video titled, "Energy Is Us." The video spotlights how collectively electric co-ops are meeting today's challenges, and are well-positioned to keep energy safe, affordable and reliable for their members.

Roger Johanneck, general manager, said that while the Cooperative has been successful in a number of areas of operation this past year, there are still areas for improvement. Johanneck noted that with proper planning

in the areas of tree planting, standby generators and adding new load, the membership could help the Cooperative be more efficient, more reliable and the membership less vulnerable to service interruptions.

Johanneck noted that the Cooperative has spent more than \$2 million in brushing the past 12 years, not including the cost of brushing and removing trees from the line caused by storms. Johanneck thanked the membership for allowing RLEC crews doing meaningful brushing in areas where trees needed to be cut back. Johanneck also talked about the need to let the Cooperative know when additional load is planned for a service. Upgrading services during normal working hours is more efficient and safer than responding to an outage caused by service overload.

Johanneck then discussed the issue of momentary blinks in electric service and explained some of the causes for these blinks. Johanneck stated that along with the distribution line work that is done to fix blink interruptions, Minnkota Power Cooperative has also committed additional funds to perform work on its transmission system. Minnkota's investment in blink mitigation upgrades will help improve service and reduce blinks on the line. Johanneck also discussed a new off-peak rate for electric vehicle chargers that included rebates for chargers up to \$500 and an off-peak rate to qualifying charger installations.

Bregier next gave the 2016 financial report and said energy sales were down slightly from the previous year, largely as a result of a warmer winter to start and end the year. The Coop-

erative sold 123.9 million kWh, bringing revenues to \$14.2 million. Bregier said the Cooperative's margin was \$618,587; this is the amount that is allocated back to the members as capital credits. Bregier reviewed various operating expenses, fixed expenses and items on the balance sheet.

Guest speaker was Gerry Pfau, senior manager of power production for Minnkota Power Cooperative in Grand Forks, N.D. Pfau oversees Minnkota's coal-based Milton R. Young Station power plant located near Center, N.D. Pfau's presentation to the meeting attendees touched on a number of areas Red Lake Electric's wholesale provider worked on the past year, including maintenance during a major outage to Minnkota's Young 2 generator.

Bonnie Christians, Steve Linder and Mark Hanson were elected at the annual meeting; they will each serve three-year terms.

Each year employees are recognized when surpassing five-year increments of accident-free work. Safety awards were presented to: Shirley Bregier, 45 years; Steve Conely, 15 years; and Jordon Gervais and Sam Pahlen, both five years. The Cooperative has gone 8½ years without a lost-time accident.

Red Lake Electric is headquartered in Red Lake Falls, Minn., and as a distribution electric cooperative, serves rural members of Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, Polk, Clearwater and Beltrami counties.



# RLEC 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting



Door prize winners: Carice Stolaas, Oklee, Presto electric skillet; Cal Harmoning, Red Lake Falls, heavy duty ratchet straps; and Sue Dupree, Thief River Falls, handcrafted bowl.



Crew foreman Casey Thronson explained to Lee and Lorna Nielson and Clayton Larson how a small crack in an insulator can cause an outage or a blink on the line.



Red Lake Electric Cooperative linemen offered a shuttle service by golf cart before and after the annual meeting. Pictured is journeyman lineman Darcy Cardinal.



Janet Spinler won the table top electric grill for guessing the closest amount of items in the jar; there was 94 items and her guess was 90.



Tishara Melcher, president of the Red Lake Electric Trust board, presents a \$1,000 grant check to Sue Helm of North Country Horsemen Trails to Treatments.



Red Lake Electric Power Use Advisor Javen Eidsmoe gave the invocation at the 79th annual meeting.



Kelly Schultz of Red Lake Falls sang the national anthem at Red Lake Electric's annual meeting. Kelly is the daughter of Lyndon and Laurie Schultz.

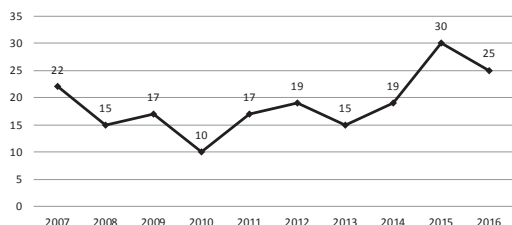


Members of Red Lake Electric listen to Bonnie Christians, board president, call the meeting to order.

## QUICK TAKES

A look at some statistics  
from your Red Lake Electric Cooperative

### Vehicle & Equipment Contacts



In hopes that something can be learned from knowing the mistakes of others, examples of how these accidents occurred in Red Lake Electric's service area:

- Combine auger hitting power line
- Backhoe digging into buried cable
- Vehicle backing into pole
- Tractor hitting and breaking pole
- Tree falling onto power line while cutting
- Cultivator snagging a guy wire
- Crop sprayer hitting power line
- Wind blowing ladder into secondaries

Many of you will soon be busy getting ready for planting crops. Because spring and fall (3614001.08 Chad V. Reed) are the times when we see most line and equipment contacts, our plea is to think safety as you go about your work.

## NOTICE OF NAMES

Hidden within the text of the articles of this issue of the *Volts & Jolts* are the names and account numbers of some Red Lake Electric Cooperative members. They will appear within the articles in parentheses as such (9999999.99 Willie Ray Member). If you find your name and account number, clip it out and send it with you next payment. You will be credited with \$5 on your electric bill.

## Planning a spring digging or construction project?

As you're putting together your timeline, please keep a couple of things in mind:

- **Safe digging is no accident. You need to know what's below! Call 811 before you begin.** One free call will get your utility lines marked. Visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com) for more information.
- **Call to schedule a consultation and discuss your electrical needs.** New buildings and additions often require upgraded electrical services. Act early to get on the cooperative's schedule. Please call 218-253-2168.



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.

# FIND YOUR BALANCE WITH BUDGET BILLING



**BALANCE YOUR BILLS WITH BUDGET BILLING:** Predictable payments make budgeting easy! Avoid seasonal fluctuations in your electric bill by signing up for Budget Billing, the payment plan that helps you balance your monthly payments.

**HOW IT WORKS:** You simply pay a set amount each month. Red Lake Electric determines this amount based on your previous 12 months' usage history, anticipated energy costs and other factors. Budget Billing does not reduce your overall energy expense – it simply lets you spread out your expense so you'll be able to manage your household budget a little easier.

**NEW BUDGET AMOUNT:** Each May, a new budget amount is calculated for the next 12 months.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** To qualify for Budget Billing, you need to have been a member for one year in your current residence (4409077.04 Kevin W. Rook) and your account must be paid in full.

**ENROLL TODAY:** To enroll in the Budget Billing program, visit us online at [www.redlakeelectric.com](http://www.redlakeelectric.com) or contact Red Lake Electric billing department at (800) 245-6068.



Through the Infinity Renewable Energy program, you can decide how much of the electricity you purchase is generated by renewable resources.

Contact RLEC today to learn more  
about how you can participate in the program.

## Don't want to write a check? Want to save on postage?

Red Lake Electric has a new payment option to make paying your bill easy. This service is free. Sign-up is simple. Go to [www.redlakeelectric.com](http://www.redlakeelectric.com) and click on the Bill4U icon. There is now an app for your smartphone. Just go to your app store and download the free app. Bill4U allows you to:

- Make payments 24 hours a day directly from your checking or savings account, eliminating the cost of the check and postage.
- Access your billing statements at any time.
- View and compare your kilowatt-hour usage.

If you have any questions or need more information, visit our website or call Red Lake Electric 800-245-6068.







## Cards of Thanks

Thank you so much for the very useful ratchet straps I won at the annual meeting. The meal was delicious.

*Cal Harmoning, Red Lake Falls*

Thank you for the very informative meeting we had on Wednesday, March 29, in Thief River Falls. Thanks for the good meal and entertainment. Also thanks for the work LED I won in the drawings.

*Douglas Toblaa, Thief River Falls*

Thank you for the heavy duty extension cord I won at the annual meeting at the Ralph. I will put it to good use. Thanks for the great service you provide as well as the great meal.

*Ray Ulrich, Thief River Falls*

Thank you for the time you took for the rebate on our purchases. Again, RLEC – always dependable and customer friendly.

*Lee & Lorna Nielson, Erskine*

The meeting for District 5 was very interesting and well planned out. Pie and ice cream are always a big hit! The slow cooker I won is just great. I do let (3803004.16 Curt A. Underdahl) my wife use it, and I eat all the food from it. An all-around win-win situation.

*Myron Anderson, Thief River Falls*

We are glad we attended the District 4 meeting in Oklee on Feb 3. Roger's personal greeting as we entered the community center was appreciated as were the warm caramel rolls and coffee. We found the presentations given by Kelli, Shirley and Roger to be interesting and informative. Thank you for the crockpot Jim won. It's the perfect size for two. We'll enjoy using it in our meal preparations! Thanks to everyone who made this an enjoyable event.

*Jim & Carol Wright, Plummer*

Thank you very much for the nice 35-foot tape measure I won at the district meeting.

*Sharon Riendeau, Brooks*

Thank you for the wall plaque I won at the District 5 meeting. The meeting was informative as usual with good fellowship and good pie also.

*Luke Kaushagen, Thief River Falls*

Thank you very much for the portable speaker with AM/FM radio. We appreciate your updating us with the presentations.

*Bonnie Camp, Thief River Falls*

The Red Lake County Sheriff's Office would like to express our sincere thanks for financially supporting our child safety and drug education program.

*Mitch Bernstein*

*Sheriff of Red Lake County*

### Thank you to the RLEC Trust:

On behalf of the staff and clients of the Inter County Nursing Service, I would like to thank you for the Operation Round Up grant we received. This is a great help to work with children in our area on health and fitness.

*Anita Cardinal, Director*

Thank you so much for the recent Operation Round Up grant you awarded us, which will benefit the Marshall County Social Service Little Brother/Little Sister Program.

*Stacey Urbaniak, Marshall County  
Social Service Case Aide*

Thank you so very much for the generous grant to the TRF Area Community Theater children's programs. We are so very grateful for your support.

*Jane Anderson, Executive Director,  
TRF Area Community Theater*

On behalf of the staff and clients of the Inter County Nursing Service, I would like to thank you for the Operation Round Up grant we received. This is a great help to the clients that we serve in receiving home care services.

*Anita Cardinal, Director*

Thank you so much for the Operation Round Up's support of Pennington County Crime Victim Services! The funds will go a long way to give aid to victims of crime in our county.

*Gretchen Weinrich, Program Coordinator*

Thank you so much for the grant to the Life Care Center. With this gift we are able to continue our ministry of giving the gift of life to unborn children and assisting families. May God's blessing be with you all.

*Life Care Center*

# CLASSIFIEDS

Members are invited to use this FREE WANT AD service.

If you have anything to trade or sell, just drop a card to Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750.

## Want Ad Order Form

### FREE for RLEC members

For sale and wanted items only. All ads must be 50 words or less. Ads are published for Red Lake Electric members at no charge. Ads must be typed or in clear readable print. RLEC reserves the right to edit or reject any ad.

You can submit your ad by fax, email or mail. Fax ads to: (218) 253-2630; Email ads to: [redlake@minnkota.com](mailto:redlake@minnkota.com); Mail ads to: Red Lake Electric Cooperative, PO Box 430, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750.

Include your name, address and telephone number. All telephone numbers are presumed to have a 218 area code unless noted otherwise.

Use the form below to submit your ads.

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### For Sale

**Wurlitzer Spinnet Piano** – Needs someone to play it. Red Lake Falls. Call Lorna 218-280-0592.

**Total Gym** – Great for getting in shape, asking \$450. Red Lake Falls. Call Lorna 218-280-0592.

**Portable Generator** – Campbell Hausfeld 8000 watt Briggs & Stratton Vanguard 16HPV-Twin. Never needed but serviced. Asking \$950. Red Lake Falls. Call Lorna 218-280-0592.



# Plant the right tree in the right place

Trees beautify our neighborhoods and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard ... especially to power lines.

## LARGE TREES

Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:

- Maple
- Oak
- Spruce
- Pine
- Birch
- Black walnut
- Linden
- Cottonwood
- Elm
- Poplar

## MEDIUM TREES

Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as:

- Hawthorns
- Rocky Mt. Juniper
- Russian olive
- Siberian Arborvitae
- Dogwoods
- Willow
- Ironwood
- Ohio Buckeye

## SMALL TREES

Do not plant within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.

Note: trees over 25 feet that grow into the pruning zone within 10 feet of poles may eventually need to be removed.

Height/spread of no more than 25 feet such as:

- Honeysuckle
- Crabapple
- Lilac

