



JANUARY 2019

# Volts & Jolts

Published monthly for the members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.

One of the Minnesota 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

## Member meetings Opportunity for information, discussion, fellowship

District meetings for the members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative will be held at three locations within the Cooperative's service territory. Meetings will be held within Districts 3, 6 and 9. The meetings inform attendees on current issues and programs associated with the Cooperative. Official business will be conducted at the three district meetings, (6703004.02 David Bourque) which will include the election of a director candidate. Even though a meeting may not be scheduled within the district in which you reside, you are welcome to attend a meeting of your choice. Anyone requiring special access or assistance at any one of the meeting sites should call Red Lake Electric in advance so arrangements can be made. Door prizes will be awarded, and refreshments will be served at each meeting.

### 2019 Member Meeting Schedule

Day	Date	Time	Meeting	Location
Monday	Feb. 4	7 p.m.	District 9	Black River Lutheran Church Rural Red Lake Falls
Tuesday	Feb. 5	1:30 p.m.	District 3	Newfolden Community Center Newfolden
Wednesday	Feb. 6	7 p.m.	District 6	Terrebonne Town Hall Rural Red Lake Falls

			Huntly	Como				
	West Valley	New Maine	Spruce Valley	Cedar	Whiteford			
Foldahl	Marsh Grove	New Folden ● 3	Holt	East Valley 2	Mud Lake	Eckvold	Valley	
	Viking	New Solum	Excel	Agder	Grand Plain	Moylan	Espelle	
	Numedal	Norden	North	Silverton 5	Cloverleaf	Goodridge	Reiner	
	Bray 9	Sanders	Rocksburg 8	Smiley	Kratka	Highland	Star 7	Red Lake Indian Res.
Belgium	Polk Centre ●	Black River	River Falls	Wyandotte	Mayfield	Deerpark	Hickory	
	Wylie	Brown's Creek	River					
Parnell	Louisville	Red Lake Falls	Cervais 6	Emardville	Garnes	Equality	Johnson	
Crookston	Gentilly	Lake Pleasant	Terrebonne ●	Poplar River	Lambert	Chester 4		
Fairfax	Kertonville 1	Tilden	Grove Park	Badger	Lessor	Hill River		● Member Meeting Locations
Russia	Onstad	<b><u>DIRECTOR DISTRICTS</u></b> Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.						

## RED LAKE ELECTRIC ANNUAL MEETING Wednesday, April 3

Red Lake Electric Cooperative members are encouraged to mark their calendars for the Cooperative's annual meeting. The meeting will be called to order at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, April 3, at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls.

## Director elections to be held

Red Lake Electric Cooperative members in District 3, 6 and 9 will soon elect directors to represent them. The initial elections will take place at the upcoming district meetings. Final election will occur at the Cooperative's annual meeting April 3 if there is more than one nominee. Districts 3, 6 and 9 are currently represented by Colette Kujava, Randy Versdahl and Peter Mosbeck, respectively. Directors must be members residing in the district they represent and have no conflicts of interest regarding Red Lake Electric Cooperative. Any candidate for director must have his or her name stated as the "member" on the Cooperative's records. For more information on director qualifications and responsibilities, contact Stephanie Johnson, General Manager, at 800-245-6068 or 218-253-2168.

## Red Lake Electric Cooperative Director qualification requirements

No member shall be eligible to become or remain a director who:

- Is not a member of the Cooperative and receiving electric service at the member's primary residence in the district from which the director is elected.
- Was an employee of the Cooperative within three years preceding a director candidate's nomination.
- Will be, is or at any time during the three (3) years preceding a director candidate's nomination was employed by a labor union, which represents or has represented, or has endeavored to represent any employees of the Cooperative.
- Is a parent, spouse or cohabitant of any employee of the Cooperative.
- Is a person who is a parent, spouse or cohabitant of an incumbent director who is not up for re-election at that time.
- Is in any way employed by or substantially financially interested in an enterprise competing with the Cooperative or any Cooperative-affiliated business.
- Is or becomes the full-time employee or agent of, or who is or becomes the full-time employer or principal of, another director.

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**OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

President . . . . . Randy Versdahl  
Vice President . . . . . Stacy Blawat  
Secretary-Treasurer . . . . . Mark Hanson  
Directors . . . . . Cecil Anderson,  
Aaron Chervestad, Bonnie Christians,  
Colette Kujava, Steve Linder, Peter Mosbeck

Stephanie Johnson . . . . . General Manager  
Shirley Bregier . . . . . Manager of Finance  
& Administration  
Steve Conely . . . . . Manager of Electric  
System Operations  
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: [info@redlakeelectric.com](mailto:info@redlakeelectric.com)

**CALL BEFORE YOU DIG  
1-800-252-1166 or 811****MINNESOTA STATE  
ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS**

Northwest corner of Polk and western Marshall Counties:  
**Wayne Bergstrom – 701-520-9771**

Pennington and eastern Marshall Counties:  
**Bryan Holmes – 218-686-1413**

Red Lake and most of Polk Counties:  
**George Stage – 701-306-3511**

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 Stephanie Johnson



**H**appy new year! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season.

Looking back at 2018, our energy sales were up a slight margin and our expenses held steady. We ended 2018 with a healthy 42 percent equity level. Red Lake Electric was fortunate to not be hit with any major storm damage, and our employees operated safely with zero lost-time injuries.

At the November board meeting, your board of directors approved the 2019 operating and capital improvement (construction) budget. There is no projected rate increase in the 2019 budget. We should be able to meet financial obligations in 2019 with current rates, barring any unforeseen events that could impact our cost to deliver reliable energy to the membership. Severe damage to the

cooperative's distribution system or a significant increase in your cooperative's billing peaks, coupled with flat or declining kilowatt-hour sales, are examples of events that could have an impact on the cost to deliver energy to the membership.

In 2019, we will continue to implement the AMI (Automated Metering Infrastructure). At this time, about one-third of our territory is completed. Starting in April, we will have fully converted our billing system to NISC (National Information Solutions Cooperative). In future *Volts & Jolts* and at our annual meeting, we will have examples of your new bill format. The employees continue to train and work hard to make this transition as smooth as possible.

Stay warm and enjoy the snow!

## 2019 Electrical Continuing Education Classes

**2019 ELECTRICAL WORKSHOPS****JAN. 31**

Bigwood  
Event Center  
925 Western Avenue  
Fergus Falls, Minn.

**FEB. 1**

Eagles Club  
1270 Neilson Ave SE  
Bemidji, Minn.

**FEB. 5, 6**

Minnkota Power  
Cooperative Headquarters  
5301 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. South  
Grand Forks, N.D.

Minnkota Power Cooperative and the associated systems will again provide an opportunity for area electricians to obtain credits for license renewal by attending one of the continuing education classes being offered throughout Minnkota's service area.

This marks the 31<sup>st</sup> year of the successful program, which is aimed at providing area trade allies (2702004.01 CP Railway) with the latest information on electrical code and practices.

The electrical workshops will be held Jan. 31 at the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls, the Eagles Club in Bemidji on Feb. 1 and at Minnkota Power Cooperative's headquarters in Grand Forks Feb. 5 and Feb. 6.

The registration fee is \$75 for eight code credits. Taking the class on multiple days will not qualify for 16 code credits. Registration can be done online at [www.minnkota.com](http://www.minnkota.com). Registration must be completed at least seven days prior to the seminar.

For residential building contractor continuing education workshops, contact your local home builders association.

For more information about the program, call (701) 795-4292 or email questions to [contractortraining@minnkota.com](mailto:contractortraining@minnkota.com).



## Line Service Department

by Steve Conely



I hope you all had a happy holiday season, and I wish you the best in 2019. 2018 was a busy year for Red Lake Electric Co-op. We converted over 5½ miles of single-phase overhead power line to three-phase overhead power line. This upgrade will help with service reliability and prepare us for load growth. In the spring of 2018, RLEC began to install Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI). The new AMI will help Red Lake Electric better serve our member-owners. Once it is fully deployed and operational, RLEC will be alerted to outages as they happen, before being notified from our members. This will help RLEC staff determine the members without power and should help shorten outage time. We will also have the ability to instantaneously check voltage at the meter; this will help us diagnose a problem when a member calls in. As of Jan. 7, 2019, we have changed out roughly 1,900 meters, or (5913014.01 Dan Juhl) about a quarter of the meters to be changed out. AMI installation will take a few years to complete.

Our membership continues to

grow. Most years RLEC will build about 50 new services. This year was better than average. We put up 70 new services. Of the new accounts, 25 were for new homes, 15 for businesses, 10 for intersection lighting and 15 for farm-related sites (i.e., fencers, drain tile pumps, bin fans, and irrigation pumps and pivots). The remaining included a service at a veteran's park and cabins. To supply power to these new services, RLEC had to construct one-half mile of overhead line and about seven miles of underground line.

I would like to extend my appreciation to the landowners I have worked with over the past year that allowed us access to their land to provide power or improve the electric infrastructure for another's benefit. Thank you! This is and has been the cooperative way for 80 years.

In closing, if you have added or plan to add bin fans, grain dryers, electric heat or any other larger electric load, please contact us to avoid overloading your electric service and damaging our equipment. Stay safe in 2019 and if you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

## Recipe Corner



Submit your recipes to be published in *Volts & Jolts*. Email to [info@redlakeelectric.com](mailto:info@redlakeelectric.com) or mail to: Red Lake Electric Cooperative, PO Box 430, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750.

### Cowboy Casserole

1/2 pound ground beef  
1 15.25-oz. can whole kernel corn, drained  
1 10 3/4-oz. can condensed cream of mushroom soup, undiluted  
1 1/4 cup shredded Colby Jack cheese, divided  
1/3 cup 2 percent milk  
1/4 cup sour cream  
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder  
1/2 teaspoon onion powder  
1/2 medium yellow onion, chopped  
2 cloves of garlic, minced  
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper  
2 cups frozen tater tots  
1/4 cup Rotel tomatoes  
1 tablespoon chives  
1/4 cup sliced olives, optional

In a medium skillet, cook hamburger over medium heat until browned. Remove from skillet and set aside on a plate. Drain the grease and lightly wipe most of the remaining grease out, leaving a little (7220038.01 Samantha J. Knudson) bit to cook your onions.

Add onions and garlic and cook until soft, about 4 minutes.

Add hamburger back to skillet with the onions and garlic. Add 1/4 cup of Rotel tomatoes, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper and stir well. Let cook over medium heat until most of the liquid from the Rotel tomatoes has cooked off.

Add sour cream, cream of mushroom soup, drained corn, half of the cheese and milk. Stir well. Let cook until cheese is melted.

Put cheesy hamburger mixture in the bottom of the casserole dish. Add olives and half of the remaining cheese.

Add layer of tater tots and press down a little bit to make sure they are stuck in the mixture just a little bit. Cover the top of the tater tots with remaining cheese and chives.

Bake at 425° for 20-25 minutes or until the cheese is melted and you can see the casserole bubbling up on the sides and the middle just a bit.

## New year. Great rebates.

*Great rebates and incentives are available to help you upgrade your heating and cooling system or electric water heater.*




Check out the Energy Rebate Programs on our website

**[www.redlakeelectric.com](http://www.redlakeelectric.com)**

under the Member Services tab.



A photograph of the Milton R. Young Station, a large industrial facility with two tall smokestacks emitting white plumes of smoke. The facility is situated near a body of water, with tall grass in the foreground. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

The Milton R. Young Station, a lignite-based facility located near Center, N.D., is the focus of Project Tundra.

# Ready for research

*State of North Dakota approves up to \$15 million for Project Tundra*

**R**esearch on what would be the world's largest carbon capture facility received invaluable support from the state of North Dakota in November.

The North Dakota Industrial Commission unanimously approved up to \$15 million in state funding for Project Tundra, which aims to connect the state's coal and oil industries to produce more energy, reduce emissions and generate long-term economic benefits.

Funding for the project, led by Minnkota Power Cooperative, Red Lake Electric Cooperative's wholesale power provider, would help pay for the engineering and design study for a CO<sub>2</sub> capture system at the Milton R. Young Station located near Center, N.D. The funding is contingent on the project receiving an additional \$15 million

from the U.S. Department of Energy.

"The state of North Dakota has long been a leader in energy innovation thanks to strong support from its elected officials and the pioneering spirit of its companies," said Mac McLennan, Minnkota president & CEO. "This research funding is essential to understanding how this breakthrough technology can be applied to North Dakota facilities."

The project would capture CO<sub>2</sub> inside a large vessel using a solvent called amine. Once enough CO<sub>2</sub> has bonded with the amine, it would be pumped to a separate vessel where heat is applied to break the bond and create a pure CO<sub>2</sub> stream. The CO<sub>2</sub> is then delivered through a pipeline to area oil fields where it can be used for enhanced oil recovery. This process

includes injecting CO<sub>2</sub> into conventional wells to substantially increase oil production.

The project, estimated to cost \$1.3 billion, is not something Minnkota will take on alone. Other entities involved in Project Tundra include BNI Energy, Bismarck, N.D.; Eagle Energy Partners, Minot, N.D.; and the Energy and Environmental Research Center at the University (4518005.01 David L. Lee) of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N.D.

Despite the initial capital cost, demand for carbon capture technology has been made even greater by the passage of 45Q tax credit reform. As part of legislation passed in February, the federal tax credits have been increased to \$35 per ton for CO<sub>2</sub> that is captured and used for enhanced oil recovery and \$50 per ton that is captured and stored in a geologic formation deep underground. These tax credits are projected to represent up to \$1 billion in value to Project Tundra.

### Proven technology

As Project Tundra transitions into the next phase of research, it has hired one of the world's foremost experts in CO<sub>2</sub> technology and development. David Greeson joined the project team in October after previously serving as the vice president of development at Texas-based NRG Energy. In that role, he led the development of the Petra Nova initiative, which is the world's largest post-combustion CO<sub>2</sub> capture and

enhanced oil recovery project. Petra Nova was completed on schedule and on budget in December 2016.

Project Tundra is modeled after the Petra Nova initiative, which is capturing about 90 percent of the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted from a 240-megawatt (MW) flue gas slipstream. The captured CO<sub>2</sub> is then injected into mature reservoirs to release more oil. This process revitalized a diminishing oil field, increasing production by 1,300 percent.

Project Tundra aims to build on the success of Petra Nova by applying a similar, but much larger, set of technologies to Unit 2 of the Young Station. Unit 2 is a 455-MW generation facility that began commercial operation in 1977. The facility has previously been retrofitted with emissions control equipment that meets or exceeds all current air quality standards.

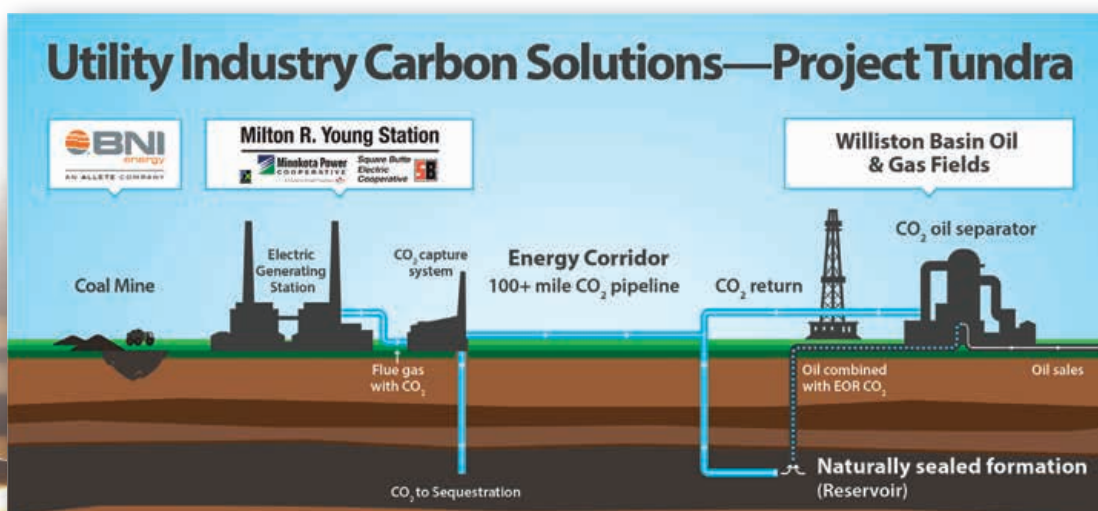
"David's knowledge and expertise in the area of carbon capture development provide immeasurable value to the Project Tundra team," McLennan said. "The project team has done an excellent job advancing the initial research projects. As we move forward, it becomes essential to have a dedicated project manager. David's credentials indicate that he has the ability to guide this project to the finish line."

For more information on Project Tundra, visit [ProjectTundraND.com](http://ProjectTundraND.com).



David Greeson

### Project Partners:



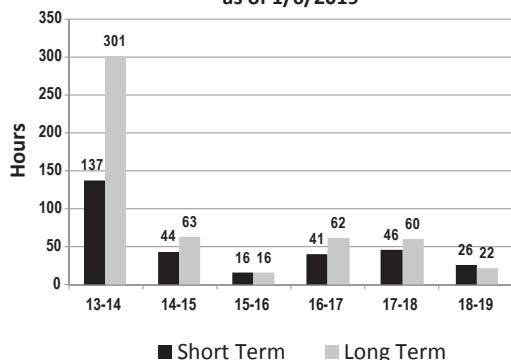


## QUICK TAKES

A look at some statistics from your  
Red Lake Electric Cooperative

The chart below shows the amount of control time estimated for Red Lake Electric Cooperative's off-peak customers this heating season and a comparison of the seasonal control over the past five years. Off-peak control hours are impacted in a number of ways, including weather, variable energy output from Minnkota's wind energy resources and energy availability in the wholesale energy market.

**Off-Peak Control Hours**  
as of 1/6/2019



200-250 control hours estimated for 2018-2019 heating season.

## STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

## 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 your next payment. You will be credited with \$5 on your electric bill.



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

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

The Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc., of Red Lake Falls, as an operating electric utility in the state of Minnesota, is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from co-generators and small power producers.

The cooperative will provide information relating to the said interconnections to all interested member-consumers of the cooperative free of charge upon request.

Any disputes between the cooperative and its member-consumers over interconnection, sales and purchases are subject to resolution by the Red Lake Electric Board of Directors.

## FEDERAL/STATE ENERGY ASSISTANCE

If you need help paying your electric utility bill, you may qualify for state or federal fuel assistance. For complete, qualification and application information, contact your local county welfare or community/citizen's action council listed below. These organizations may also provide budget counseling.

### Inter-County Community Council

Oklee, MN  
Serves East Polk, Pennington  
and Red Lake Counties  
218-796-5144  
Toll-free: 1-888-778-4008  
Fax: 218-796-5175

### Northwest Community Action

Badger, MN  
Serves East Marshall County  
218-528-3258  
Toll-free: 1-800-568-5329  
Fax: 218-528-3259

### Tri-Valley Opportunity Council

Crookston, MN  
Serves West Polk,  
West Marshall County  
218-281-9080  
Toll-free: 1-866-264-3729  
Fax: 218-281-0705

### Red Lake Community Action Agency

Red Lake, MN  
Serves Beltrami County  
218-679-1880

## ELECTRIC HEAT EXEMPTION

This is to certify that the primary source of heat for my residence is electricity and I am eligible for the electric heating sales tax exemption as provided by Minnesota State Law. The primary source is the source that supplies more heat than any other source for the largest period of time during the heating season.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



**It's more than  
electricity.**



**It's 80 years of commitment.**

The way you use electricity has changed, but what hasn't changed is our commitment to providing you with the most reliable, efficient service possible. Red Lake Electric Cooperative combines 80 years of experience with the use of today's most innovative technologies. We know what worked well in the past, and we know where we need to be in the future to best serve you.

As a cooperative, we're owned and governed by the people we serve.

Your cooperative. Your electricity.  
**Be powerful.**

**Powerful** *Value*  
Every day.

## AMI update

Red Lake Electric Cooperative (RLEC) is deploying a new Automated Metering Information (AMI) system across its service territory. RLEC employees will visit the member's properties to upgrade their meters.

If your residence has an off-peak meter and you are not home at the time of the meter upgrade, your main meter will be upgraded and a door hanger will be left. The door hanger will kindly ask you to contact the office to set up an appointment for us to change out your off-peak meter. Meter changeouts will only be completed (3819010.06 Mark D. Lehrer) during our normal business hours. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

**Phone: 218-253-2168**

Email [info@redlakeelectric.com](mailto:info@redlakeelectric.com)

## Director nomination and election procedure

The procedure for which directors can be nominated and elected for Red Lake Electric Cooperative is outlined in Article II, Section 10, of the Cooperative's Bylaws. That section reads as follows:

**SECTION 10. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF DIRECTORS.** (a) Nomination at District Meetings. Not less than forty days nor more than sixty days before any meeting at which directors are to be elected, the board of directors shall call a separate meeting of the members of each district from which directors are to be elected, at a suitable place in such district for the purpose of selecting a candidate for director to represent the members located within such district. The notice of such meeting shall be delivered to each member located in such district as provided in Section 2 of this Article and shall indicate the district to which such member belongs. The notice shall state that nominations for a director are to be made at the meeting. The district meeting shall be called to order by the director representing the district or by another designated representative of the board of directors, or in his absence, by any members residing in the district. The members shall then proceed to elect a chairman, who shall be someone other than a director, and who shall appoint a secretary to act for the duration of the meeting. Members of other districts present at the meeting may be heard, but shall have no vote. Nominations for candidates for director shall be made from the floor at the meeting, and any member residing in the district shall have the right to nominate one candidate. The meeting shall remain open for nominations until no further nominations are forthcoming.

Candidates must be members residing in the district and must possess the qualifications for director specified in Section 2 of Article III of these bylaws. Voting shall be by ballot, and proxy voting shall not be permitted at any district meeting. Each member may vote for one candidate. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared the official candidate of the district. In case of a tie, the winner shall be determined by the flip of a coin. The minutes of the district meeting shall set forth, among other matter, the name of each person nominated at the meeting and the number of votes received by each and shall specify the official candidate of the district. A certified copy of the minutes signed by the Secretary and the Chairman of the district meeting shall be delivered to the secretary of the Cooperative at the following meeting of the board.

(b) Nomination of Directors by Petition. Nomination for director can also be made by petition. Fifteen (15) or more members may make a nomination in writing to the Secretary over their signatures not less than thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting. This petition nomination must be in the format prescribed by the Secretary. Blank nomination petitions shall be available to all members at the Cooperative office. All petition nominees shall be listed in the notice of annual meeting, and their names shall be printed on the election ballot.

(c) Election of Directors. At the annual meeting, the Secretary of the Cooperative shall place in nomination the names of the official candidates of each district. Election of directors shall be by printed ballot, separate ballots to be provided for each district, listing the candidates in alphabetical order. Only members of a district shall be entitled to vote for director to be elected from that district, and each member or member's spouse shall be entitled to vote for one candidate from the district in which he is a member. The candidate from each district receiving the highest number of votes at this meeting shall be declared elected as director. In the case of a tie vote, the winner shall be determined by the flip of a coin. Notwithstanding anything contained in this section, failure to comply with any of the provisions of this section shall not affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any election of directors.

(d) Voting by Mail for Directors. The members shall be entitled to vote by mail for directors at annual and special meetings as provided in this section. Each member shall be mailed a director election ballot in the form prescribed by the Board of Directors with the notice of the annual or special meeting. A member who will be absent from the meeting may vote by mail for directors by marking the ballot for the candidate of the member's choice. The member shall return the ballot personally or by mail to the Cooperative in a sealed plain envelope inside another envelope bearing the member's name. If the ballot of the member is received by the Cooperative on or before the date of the annual or special meeting, the ballot shall be accepted and counted as the vote of the absent member.



**Red Lake Electric  
Cooperative, Inc.**

# Let's keep a good thing going

*Red Lake Electric urges members not to plug in electric space heaters during load control times*

**A**s members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative know, the load management program is a good thing to have around. The program helps keep electric rates among the lowest in the country.

The program could lose much of its value, however, if electric space heaters – including those being advertised regionally – were to be substituted on a large-scale basis for the backup heating systems that are used during high demand times.

## **Based on honor system**

In the load management program, Red Lake Electric members maintain adequate and reliable dual heating systems. This, in turn, qualifies them for off-peak rates that are nearly 50 percent less than regular retail rates. These systems include electric floor heat, electric furnaces and other loads that can be interrupted during peak-use times.

When the backup systems are in operation, electric load on the regional power system is reduced. This, in turn, allows our power supplier, Minnkota Power Cooperative, to avoid buying higher-cost supplemental power from the wholesale market.

While there are requirements that have to be met to qualify for participation in the off-peak program, there is a cer-

tain amount of honor involved, too. Members need to allow their backup systems to take over rather than plugging in one or more electric space heaters.

"If members of the associated distribution system violate the spirit of the program, there will be consequences," explains Todd Sailer, Minnkota energy supply manager. "Those consequences would include higher rates for all members and extended control times for those members who are playing by the rules of the load management program."

## **Major concerns**

Recently, ads have appeared in regional newspapers and on the radio promoting certain types of electric space heaters. Red Lake Electric Cooperative is concerned that members might be paying more money for products that aren't going to result in the savings they anticipated.

"No matter how they promote it, a 1,500-watt heater is a 1,500-watt heater," explained Kelli Brateng, member services manager at Red Lake Electric Cooperative. "You can get a space heater at the local hardware store for less than \$50. If someone is buying one of these because of advertisements, they could be spending a lot more money – up to \$400 – for something that might have a fancy cover on it, but in the end,

all they are really getting is a 1,500-watt heater."

Members who plug in space heaters during periods of load control create another concern. The benefits of the load management program are greatly diminished when this occurs.

"Electric space heaters create additional demand during times when Red Lake Electric is trying to demonstrate our ability to control heating loads, which reduces our wholesale power costs from Minnkota," said Brateng.

Safety is also a huge concern with portable space heaters. Using a number of these heaters inside a home can overload circuits that were not wired for that kind of load. The consumer Products Safety Commission reports that each year about 28,000 house fires are attributed to space heaters, resulting in 300 related deaths. Space heaters are not inherently dangerous, but they need to be used wisely.

## **Dual heating systems – a better solution**

"It's not hard to understand why someone who is paying \$2.60 a gallon for fuel oil would think it is a great option to plug in a heater," said Brateng. "But what they may not understand is that over time it will increase their overall costs."

If a number of off-peak members began using one, two

or even three space heaters, this would directly affect their cooperative. This could result in a rate increase for all members, or even worse – the program could be eliminated altogether.

"Instead of the possibility of paying the full rate for electricity for space heaters, members should consider adding to their off-peak systems," Brateng said. "These systems allow Red Lake Electric Cooperative to control heating loads during times when supplemental power from the open market is most expensive."

By either expanding a dual heating system or developing a new one, members will receive the most economical rate available for their electricity, and the integrity of the load management system will be maintained long into the future.

A blend of primary off-peak electric heat with a fuel oil, propane or natural gas backup heating system is less expensive than heating (5134003.01 Ben L. Linder) with fossil fuels alone.

"Off-peak electric heating continues to be the most economical heating choice this winter season," Brateng said.

Information about developing a dual heat system is available by contacting the member service department at Red Lake Electric Cooperative. Call 1-800-245-6068 or 253-2168 for more details.