

Newsline

March 2011



Youth Tour deadline approaching



Runestone Electric is seeking applicants for an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the 2011 Youth Tour, June 11 - 16.

To receive an application and essay details, please call (320) 762-1121 or (800) 473-1722. Applications are also available at www.RunestoneElectric.com. The entry deadline is Monday, March 15.

It's Annual Meeting time!

Come for lunch, stay for the meeting & door prizes!



Join us for the 75th Runestone Electric Association Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 26, 2011, at Jefferson High School in Alexandria. Bring your family for lunch and enjoy visiting with your friends and neighbors.

Watch your mailbox. In the coming days you will receive the Annual Meeting packet. In the packet you will find your 2010 Annual Report, a registration card, and ballot (if you are in a voting district). Please bring your registration card and ballot with you to the Annual Meeting or if you are unable to attend the meeting, you can return the ballot in the envelope provided in the packet.

We need your phone numbers

Please check to see that your phone number listed on the bottom left of your REA invoice is correct.



Is your phone number missing or incorrect on your bill? Do you also use a cell phone now?

REA 75th Annual Meeting Saturday, March 26, 2011 Jefferson High School Alexandria

- 10:30 a.m.** Registration & balloting opens
Entertainment by Dennis Zaviska in gymnasium
- 11:30 a.m.** Lunch served in cafeteria
- 1:00 p.m.** Annual Meeting with door prizes to follow including ten-\$50 bill credits

Director seats in Districts Three, Six and Seven will be determined at the 2011 Annual Meeting. Nominated for election to the Board of Directors include:

District Three

Audrey Hjelle
Lien Township

District Six

Bryan Withers
Orange Township

District Seven

Mike Johnson
Blue Mounds Township

Learn about each candidate on page 3



Come to the Annual Meeting and receive a tape measure

A quick call or email to Runestone Electric today, will speed the process of restoring electricity to your home or business when you call to report a power outage. When we have your current phone number(s) on file, our automated outage reporting system has the information it needs to determine your location. We also need your correct phone number(s) to notify our members of planned outages that will be affecting them.

Even though outages are rare on REA's well-maintained system, disruptions do occur. Our goal is to re-energize your service with minimal inconvenience to you. You can help by updating your phone number today. Please give us a call at (320) 762-1121 or (800) 473-1722 or send an email to rea@RunestoneElectric.com.

Board Meeting Highlights

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Runestone Electric Association was held on January 27, 2011.

In addition to the regular board meeting, a joint board meeting was held with the Stearns Electric Board of Directors. This meeting represents our continuing efforts to look for ways the two cooperatives can work together.

- MREA General Manager Mark Glaess provided a presentation on many issues facing cooperatives today and discussed how EPA regulations will have an effect on electrical rates. Mr. Glaess discussed carbon regulations and CIP changes, as well as renewable energy standards which will present a challenge to rural cooperatives.
- Al Haman, Manager of Operations and Engineering at Runestone Electric as well as CEO & PE of STAR Energy Services discussed the process used to determine the magnitude and sources of stray voltage found on farms. Causes for possible stray voltage on and off the farm were also covered.

The regular March Board Meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 25.

February Heating Degree Days

2011	.....	1,443	(estimated)
2010	.....	1,444	
2009	.....	1,433	
2008	.....	1,590	

January 2011 Statistics

Kilowatt-hours Sold

2011	.....	25,149,279
2010	.....	24,800,124

Cost of Purchased Power

2011	.....	\$1,374,763
2010	.....	\$1,401,429

Cost per Kilowatt-hour Purchased

2011	.....	\$.051
2010	.....	\$.053

Number of Accounts

2011	.....	13,605
2010	.....	13,524



Plan to attend the Annual Meeting

by CEO Rick Banke

I would personally like to invite each and every member to our 75th Annual Meeting on March

26th. Come for lunch, visit with friends and neighbors as you enjoy the music of Dennis Zaviska and stay for the Annual Meeting. You might even be one of the lucky door prize winners.

Director elections this year are being held in Districts 3, 6 & 7. The Cooperative is divided into seven districts with rotating districts holding elections each year. Cooperative consumers are not just "customers" but are "member-owners" of the cooperative and have the right to vote for directors every three years.

In the coming days, all members in District 3, 6 & 7 (see maps on page 3) will receive a packet of information that includes the Annual Meeting voting material. Director voting is available before the business meeting or through the mail-in process. If you have any questions on the voting process please give us a call. For members that are in non-voting districts you will receive an Annual Report and a registration card.

As a Cooperative, we strive each day to provide you with service you can count on. Our Annual Meeting is our members' chance to let us know how we are doing at serving your needs.

Small change that changes lives!

That's the motto of Operation Round Up® and we are seeing first-hand the impact of this very important program in the communities we serve.

Since its inception in 2002, Operation Round Up has given over \$462,000 in grants to area non-profit organizations. Over 900 grants have been distributed to help fund area needs, such as first responders, fire departments, youth and senior activities, health programs, food shelves and more in our service territory.

Operation Round Up is administered by the REA Community Trust Board. This is separate board made up of volunteers from REA's seven districts. Board members include President Jeff Dreier, Elbow Lake; Vice-President Bruce Ferris, Osakis; Secretary/Treasurer Carla Beem, Miltna; Jerome Hagen, Cyrus; Tim Philbrick, Farwell;

Kathy Anderson, Parkers Prairie; and DeWayne Bisek, Nelson.

After serving three terms, **Jeff Dreier, Bruce Ferris and Jerome Hagen** were recently honored for their service on the Trust Board. We are so fortunate to have dedicated members willing to volunteer their time to make a difference in the communities we serve.



The Operation Round Up® Community Trust Board members include (front row, left to right): Jerome Hagen, Jeff Dreier and Carla Beem. (Back row, left to right): Bruce Ferris, DeWayne Bisek, Tim Philbrick and Kathy Anderson.

REA Board of Directors Director Candidate Profiles

Election results will be announced at the Annual Meeting on March 26

District 3



Audrey Hjelle was nominated at the District Three meeting. An REA member since 1963, she and her husband, Tom, farm with their son near Barrett.

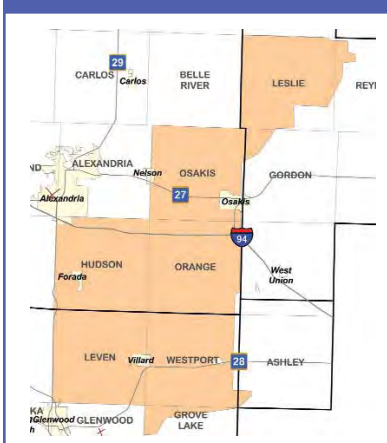
Audrey has served on the REA Board since 1996 and is the current board president. She has completed the necessary training to become a National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Credentialed Cooperative Director. She has served on the Cooperative Network board representing the utility sector.

The Hjelle's are active members in the Lake Region Pioneer Threshermen's Association, Stearns County Pioneer Club, PB & Hjelle Relay for Life Team, and the Western Minnesota Steam Thrashers Reunion. Audrey is a trustee of the Barrett Senior Citizens and they attend Peace Lutheran Church in Barrett.



Audrey Hjelle

District 6



Bryan Withers was nominated at the District Six meeting. A resident of Orange Township, Bryan has been a REA member since 1970 and has been a director since 2008. He serves as the Vice-President of the current board. Brian has completed the necessary training to become a National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Credentialed Cooperative Director.

Bryan is a member of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Osakis. He participates in the Osakis Sportsmen Club and the Osakis Lions Club. In the past, he served on the Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Orange Township Board, Sauk River Watershed District Board and the Douglas County Fair board.



Bryan Withers

District 7



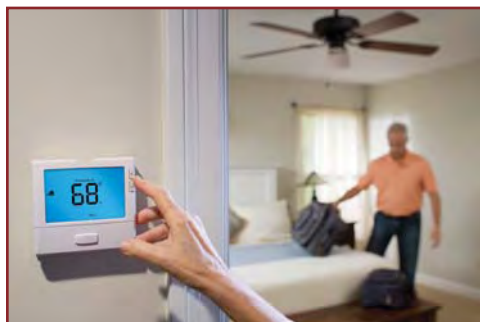
Michael E. Johnson, was nominated at the District Seven meeting in Starbuck. Mike has been an REA member since 1981 and a director since 1997. Mike has completed the necessary training to become a National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Credentialed Cooperative Director.

Mike and his wife, Judy, live southwest of Starbuck in Blue Mounds Township operating a cash grain farm with his brother and nephew. They are members of Immanuel Lutheran Church where Mike has served



Mike Johnson

on the church council and is currently the chairman of the Crosswinds Lutheran Council. He has been a member of the Starbuck Jaycees and Starbuck Lions Club and served on the Pope County Fair Board, Starbuck Economic Development Authority and Pope County Farm Bureau.



I DON'T LEAVE THE TV ON FOR THE COFFEE TABLE. WHY HEAT AN EMPTY HOUSE?

It only makes sense. My house shouldn't have to work so hard when I'm taking it easy on vacation. So now I adjust my thermostat and unplug as much as I can before I pull away. Those simple acts save me some serious money. Money I can spend on things like vacations. What can you do?

Find out how the little changes add up at **TogetherWeSave.com.**

Bring your CFLs to Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management Recycling Center
2115 S. Jefferson Street in Alexandria
For more information, please call 320-763-9340





Be An EnerGenius

\$2 OFF instant savings at
select Walmart stores

Save on select GE Energy Smart®
CFLs from March 1 - July 31, 2011

REA reserves the right to discontinue this promotion at any time. Due to the presence of mercury, CFLs must be recycled in Minnesota. It's illegal to place them directly in the garbage.



Having trouble paying your electric bill?

Steps to follow to prevent disconnection

If you are behind on paying your electric bill, please take the following steps to prevent disconnection:

1. Call us! We will work with you to set up payment arrangements, but it is extremely important that you **keep these arrangements**. Our number is 320-762-1121 or 800-473-1722.
2. Contact the fuel assistance agency for the county in which you live.
Douglas, Grant, Pope and Stevens Counties:
West Central Minnesota Communities Action, Inc. 1-800-492-4805 or (218) 685-4486.
Todd County: Todd County Social Services (320) 732-4516 or 1-888-838-4066
Otter Tail County: Otter Tail County Social Services (218) 385-2900 or 1-800-450-2900.
3. If you have used all of your fuel assistance funds, contact the agency again for emergency assistance (crisis fund).
4. Still need help? Call REA - the sooner the better and remember that the Cold Weather Rule ends April 15. We are here to help you work out a plan **before** it's too late!



Stay clear of dangers

Snow, ice and wind can cause problems with power lines and meters. Stay safe and avoid power interruptions by following these few steps:

- Clear snow and ice away from electric meters. Your electric service entrance and meter base can be damaged by snow and ice falling from the roof.
- For underground electrical services, keep snowplows and snow piles away from transformers.
- Stay clear of power lines when removing snow or ice off your roof or trees. Accidental contact with power lines can injure or kill you. **Look up and live!**

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Office Hours

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Monday - Friday

**24-hour outage &
emergency service**
(800) 473-1722

Underground cable locations
Gopher State One Call
(800) 252-1166

Board of Directors

Audrey Hjelle, President
Bryan Withers, Vice President
Barbara Johnson, Secretary
Ron Holm, Treasurer
Bill O'Brien, Director
Mike Johnson, Director
Wilbur Burquest, Director

Editorial Staff

Rick Banke, CEO
Sue Lundeen, Editor

In case of a power outage

- Make sure the problem is not on your side (Members may be billed for service calls if the problem is caused by their own equipment).
- Check your own fuses and circuit breakers in your home and by the meter pole (Call us for help if you are unsure of the location of your breakers).
- Check with your neighbors to see if their power is off and if they have reported the outage.
- If the trouble is not on your wiring, please call (800) 473-1722 for 24-hour service. Please report any tree branches in lines, twisted wires, broken poles and if your neighbors are also out of power.
- Be sure to have one corded phone in the house, because cordless phones won't work when the power is out.
- Program the number above into your cell phone for easy access.

REA is an equal opportunity provider