

Newsline

October 2011



Make safety a priority this harvest season

Don't let this happen to you. Stay alert and aware of your surroundings. Should you come in contact with a power line, stay on/in the machinery and wait for help. Never attempt to raise or move a downed power line. Call 9-1-1 or REA immediately. Program our number 320-762-1121 into your cell phone today!

Convert to Dual Fuel with an Electric Plenum Heater

How they work:

An electric plenum heater may be used in conjunction with your propane or fuel oil furnace to qualify for Runestone Electric's (REA) dual fuel rate of \$.05/kWh. The plenum heater typically sits on top of your fossil fuel furnace and uses the existing furnace fan to move air across the plenum heater elements which then heats your home. Both your fossil fuel furnace and the electric plenum heater utilize the same thermostat and ductwork.



Installing an electric plenum heater makes good sense - dollars and cents!

System types:

If you heat with fuel oil or propane, installing an electric plenum is the most popular option for installing electric heat. This results in a dual fuel heating system where either electricity or fossil fuel can heat your home. It gives you the flexibility to decide what energy source you want to use.

Rebate from REA:

Install an electric plenum heater and you will receive a rebate of \$25/kw up to \$500 maximum. The plenum heater must be designed to the heat loss of the home.

Need more information?

Visit REA's website www.RunestoneElectric.com or contact REA's Energy Experts at (320) 762-1121 or (800) 473-1722.

We need your phone numbers



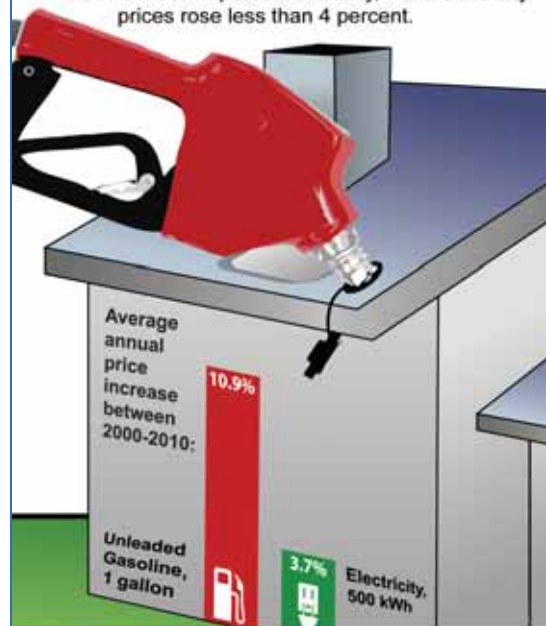
Is your phone number(s) missing or incorrect on your bill? Do you also use a cell phone now? Please let us know.

REA's Energy Wise Dual Fuel Rate of 5.0¢/kWh is competitive when you pay:

Propane	Furnace efficiency
More than 94¢ (per gallon)	70% efficient (standard unit)
More than \$1.21 (per gallon)	90% efficient (high efficiency unit)
Fuel Oil	Furnace efficiency
More than \$1.41 (per gallon)	70% efficient (standard unit)

Filling Up on VALUE

Electricity continues to be a bargain, especially when compared to other consumer goods. Imagine if your electric bill fluctuated as much as prices at the pump. On average, over the past decade gas prices have risen almost 11 percent annually, while electricity prices rose less than 4 percent.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Mainstream Graphics

Board Meeting Highlights

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Runestone Electric Association was held on August 29, 2011.

- Manager of Finance, Accounting and IT Janet Nelson demonstrated the new E-Bill program that will be available in the coming weeks for members to view and pay their electric bill online. Members will also be able to use a credit card as a form of payment, in addition to other payment options currently offered by the cooperative.
- Manager of Operations and Engineering Al Haman reviewed the outage restoration process utilized by the cooperative following the August 1, 2011, storm in which over 3,700 members were without power.
- Staff Assistant Jim Hultman reviewed the progress of the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) Report. Our mandated goal in 2011 is to spend \$174,567 and to save 1,873,662 kWh's. As of July 31, 2011 we have achieved 60% of our goal.
- Approve the updated Generation Interconnection Application Fee Schedule to align with fees established by the State of Minnesota.

The regular October Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 25.

September Heating Degree Days

2011	.....	238
2010	.....	269
2009	.....	87
2008	.....	194

August 2011 Statistics Kilowatt-hours Sold

2011	.....	17,128,789
2010	.....	17,513,710

Cost of Purchased Power

2011	.....	\$1,218,947
2010	.....	\$1,320,759

Cost per Kilowatt-hour Purchased

2011	.....	\$.068
2010	.....	\$.071

Number of Accounts

2011	.....	13,658
2010	.....	13,587

Celebrating the cooperative way of doing business

by *CEO Rick Banke*



Cooperatives have a special commitment to helping their members and their communities adapt to the times. That's because cooperatives, unlike many businesses, are locally owned and operated. And that's why cooperatives throughout the nation will be taking time during the month of October to promote a better public understanding of this unique form of business.

Runestone Electric Association (REA) has been providing our member-owners with reliable electricity, superior customer service and innovative energy solutions for more than seventy-five years. Back in the 1930's farmers decided that if they were going to get the power they needed, they would have to take action themselves. They organized

local cooperatives to provide local, consumer-owned electric service. The impact on rural quality of life was electrifying, to be sure; it was even greater than anyone had dreamed.

Today a single Midwestern family may belong to a dairy marketing cooperative, a farm supply co-op, an electric cooperative, a telephone cooperative, and co-ops for food, health, housing, and day care. The family may buy Ocean Spray® cranberry juice, Sun Maid® raisins, and Land O'Lakes® butter; purchase tools at ACE® Hardware; have its accounts at a credit union; be insured through a mutual insurance company; and hear the news through the Associated Press. All are cooperatively owned businesses.

Cooperatives are everywhere helping people meet their common needs through group effort. Some cooperatives do not have the word "cooperative" in their names, such as Runestone Electric Association, so you may not always know the enterprise is cooperatively organized. Yet there are cooperatives for everything. You'll find them everywhere people need to get things done efficiently and economically.

With this in mind, we invite you stop by our office in downtown Alexandria for cider and cookies during the month of October to celebrate the cooperative difference.



A COOPERATIVE HEALTH CHECK



Cooperatives are a flexible business model. They operate based on the seven principles of cooperation:



Open Membership: Membership is the lifeblood, but whether the members are staff, consumers, businesses or other organizations, coming together is their choice. Anyone who is eligible to be a member should be able to become a member.



Equal Say: All members get an equal say. For example, if you are electing a Board, it is one member, one vote rather than votes based on how much money you have put in.



Economic Participation: Cooperative members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the business' capital.



Good for Learning: Cooperatives have a long tradition of training and education for members.



Independence: Cooperatives shouldn't be beholden to anybody, whether government or another business.



Collaboration: Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.



Community: Commitment to community is engrained in the cooperative structure. Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

Operation Round Up® - Making a difference in our communities!



Runestone Electric Association's Operation Round Up® has distributed over \$495,000 in grants to community-minded groups and organizations throughout the Cooperative's service territory since its inception eight years ago.

Over 66% of REA members allow their bills to be rounded up an average of 51 cents per month amounting to \$6.12 per participating member for the year.

The following fifteen area organizations shared \$7,927 in grants from Operation Round Up during the third quarter distribution cycle:

Youth: Alexandria Area Hockey Association (\$250) and West Central Area Legion Baseball (\$250).

Community: Lasting Imprint (\$500); United Communities Advocating Non-Violence (UCAN) (\$500); Alexandria Literacy Project, Inc. (\$1000); Donnelly Community Club, Inc. (\$375); Birthright of Alexandria (\$750); Pope County Humane Society (\$500); Knute Nelson Foundation (\$702); Alexandria Police Department (\$500); Confidence Learning Center (\$1000); MN Special Hockey – MN Muskies (\$500); Evansville Arts Coalition (\$100); Pope County Families in Need (\$500) and American Red Cross – West Central MN Chapter (\$500).

Participation in Operation Round Up is strictly voluntary. Members that wish to participate, do nothing. Your contribution will be included on your future bills. If members want to opt-out of the program, they merely need to call REA to be removed from the rounding up of their electric bills.

Calling all non-profit organizations! Area organizations are encouraged to apply for Operation Round Up grants. The deadline for the next round of funding is November 18. Application forms are available by calling Runestone Electric at (320) 762-1121 or (800) 473-1722. Applications can be downloaded from the REA website: www.RunestoneElectric.com.

Seal cracks to save energy



Caulking cracks and openings can save you \$212 a year. Find cracks by waiting for a windy day and then carefully, from inside your home, hold a lit incense stick or a smoke pen next to your windows, doors, electrical outlets, and other spots where outside air may infiltrate. If the smoke stream moves horizontally, you've found a leak that needs to be sealed. For other tips on how to save energy—and money—visit www.TogetherWeSave.com.



Representing some of the organizations receiving Operation Round Up® grants in August (front row from left to right): Jan Arneson, Pope County Families in Need; Karen Howell, Evansville Arts Coalition; Sue Justice, MN Special Hockey – MN Muskies; Reise Kluver & Lindsey Buttweiler, Lasting Imprint; Katie Perry, Knute Nelson Foundation; (back row from left to right): Ken Voigt, American Red Cross – West Central MN Chapter; Chuck Nettetsted, United Communities Advocating Non-Violence (UCAN); Jim Gripne, Alexandria Police Department; Jodi Thorson, West Central Area Legion Baseball; Tim Philbrick, Operation Round Up Board member.

WANTED

Non-profit organizations in need of funding

History will be made in November as Operation Round Up exceeds \$500,000 in grants distributed to area organizations. Call REA for an application or visit www.RunestoneElectric.com. Be a part of this historic event.

Apply today!



State law offers bill payment arrangement to active duty military

When a household member has been ordered into active duty, for deployment, or for a change of duty station, some members may find it hard to pay their utility bills. Minnesota law protects these military personnel from shut-off if they cannot pay their utility bills in full. Please contact the Cashiering Department for details.



Cold Weather Rule effective October 15

An electric cooperative must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all the following conditions are met:

(1) The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. Income verification can be obtained on the Income Verification Form (provided by the cooperative) or obtained from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income;

(2) A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household and

(3) A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

If a residential customer must be involuntarily disconnected for failure to comply with the above, the disconnection will not occur:

(1) On a Friday, unless you decline to enter into a payment agreement offered that day in person or by personal contact.

(2) On a weekend, holiday, or the day before a holiday. (3) When the utility offices are closed. (4) After the close of business on a day when disconnection is permitted, unless a field representative who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement, accept payment and continue service, offers payment agreements.

(5) Until at least twenty (20) days after the postmark on the notice to disconnect or until fifteen (15) days after the notice and information has been personally delivered.

Prior to the disconnection of service, a customer has the RIGHT to appeal the disconnection of service to the Runestone Electric Association Board of Directors. If you choose to appeal, you must deliver or mail a personal letter stating your situation and issues in dispute. Your letter must be in our hands before the date of disconnection. You will be notified when the Board of Directors will review your appeal and you may be present at the review. No disconnection of service will take place during the appeal process.

Assistance with energy bills is provided by the following agencies. You are encouraged to contact the agency servicing your area for more information.

Douglas, Grant, Pope and Stevens Counties: West Central Minnesota Communities Action, Inc. 1-800-492-4805

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

Meeting your payment obligation

Please contact our office if you find that you cannot pay your electric bill on time. We will work with you to set up a payment schedule during the cold weather months if you think you will be unable to pay your bill on time. It is your responsibility to call our office to arrange a payment schedule. Failure to respond to a disconnect notice may lead to shut-off of service, even in mid-winter.

**Official monthly publication of
Runestone Electric Association**

PO Box 9, 124 7th Ave W
Alexandria, MN 56308
(320) 762-1121 or (800) 473-1722
Fax: (320) 763-4149
www.RunestoneElectric.com
email: REA@runestoneelectric.com

Office Hours

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Mon - Fri

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
Bill O'Brien, Treasurer
Ron Holm, 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.