



## OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

### Celebrating the Cooperative Way of Business

Runestone Electric Association is proud to be your electric cooperative. We are a community-focused organization serving our members with safe, reliable, affordable electricity and related services. We are led by members like you who understand and listen to the communities we serve. We were built by members, for members, and excess revenue, called capital credits, are shared with the members. Across the country, local cooperatives, like REA, work together to develop new technologies and infrastructure. We learn from each other. And we work together to keep the electric grid secure.

**Join us in celebrating Co-op Month!**



### CELEBRATING CO-OP MONTH AT THE REA OFFICE

Join us at the REA office during the whole month of October to enjoy cookies and refreshments in celebration of co-op month!

enjoy cookies from:



Country Blossom  
— FARM —

### Cooperatives Support Local Businesses



If you attended the REA Annual Meeting in April and received a gift certificate, please remember to redeem your certificate at one of the participating REA businesses listed below

**before 12/31/18.**

- Burr Vineyards
- Carlos Creek Winery
- Chet's Lakeside Inn
- Country Blossom Farm
- Eagleview Winery
- Erickson's Petting Zoo
- Gas Mart of Carlos
- Gas Mart of Miltona
- Jim & Judy's
- Lake Cafe at Arrowwood Resort
- Lake Miltona Golf Club
- Lake Reno Bar & Grill
- Long Lake Lodge
- Nordic Trails Golf Course
- Selective TV
- Tipsinah Mounds Golf Course

# Cooperatives Serve Their Members

Kristin Dolan, CEO, Runestone Electric Association



Kristin Dolan, CEO

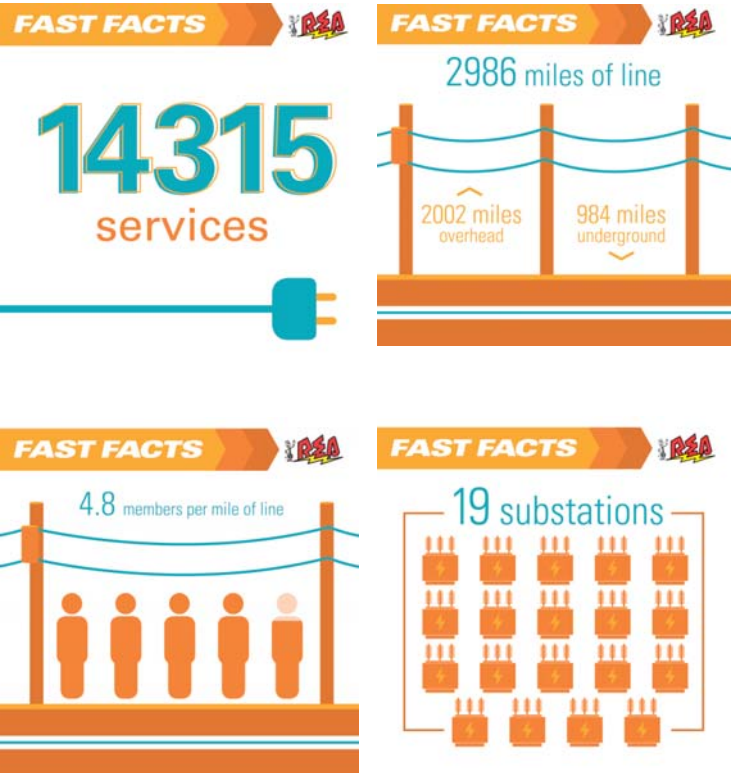
Did you know a cooperative represents an amazing business model of a community coming together? It is often said electric cooperatives were born out of politics under the Rural Electrification Act, but more importantly, they were born out of community. Electricity would not have been extended into the rural area without the members of the rural community coming together to make it happen.

October is National Cooperative Month. To celebrate I wanted to share interesting facts about your electric cooperative. We serve areas in the counties of Douglas, Pope, Grant, Stevens, Ottertail, Stearns and Todd. We serve 14,315 members through 19 substations and over 2,986 miles of line spanning our service territory. This equates to 4.8 members per

mile of line. Our service territory is 56 miles wide by 46 miles long, and we serve 67 townships. Think of all the amazing communities within our larger cooperative community in which we have the privilege to belong in and serve. The employees of your cooperative and the members who are active in your cooperative are very proud to be of service to our consumer members.

Over the years we have listened to your energy needs and in response have available several electric solutions and services. Many of our members participate in programs that save them money on their energy bills. Additional programs provide them choice in where their energy comes from and the convenience of mobile access to their account information. Best of all, we are here to provide energy expertise to help you along the way as you make your energy decisions that best fit your needs.

We wish our area farmers a safe and productive harvest season. Remember to look up for electrical lines as you work in your fields and around your farm operation.



REA Program	Participating Members
Water Heating	6,707
Space Heating Dual Fuel Electric Thermal Storage Air Source Heat Pump	3,093 270 930
Cooling	2,140
Community Solar	53
Wellspring (Renewable Energy Election)	193
Stand-By Generator Program (New in 2018)	10
Operation Round Up	8,886
SmartHub	3,722

## REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - August 2017

- Mrs. Nelson reviewed the Financial Report for July 2018 and reported energy sales for the month of July were very close to the budgeted amount. The REA margin remains ahead of budget year to date, due largely to a variance in operating expenses. More than half of these expenses to be incurred before year-end.
- CEO Dolan reported the cost of service study is complete, and findings will be presented at a future board meeting.
- REA employees involved with the automated metering infrastructure (AMI) were recognized and thanked for their work. Billing & IT Supervisor Scott

Krueger and Energy Management Lead Technician Josh Thoennes shared details on how data generated by the metering technology is utilized by employees and members.

- Mrs. Nelson reviewed the 2017 CFC Key Ratio Trend Analysis (KRTA).
- CEO Dolan reviewed Member Policy M-08 Disconnection of Service explaining the need to update the policy to reflect idle services.

The next Regular Board Meeting will be on October 30, 2018.



# Cooperatives Work With Their Members

Let us answer your questions about cold weather shut-off protection for residents and military personnel

## Q What is the Cold Weather Rule?

A The Cold Weather Rule protects some members from having their electricity shut-off due to non-payment between October 15 and April 15.

## Q Can my heat be shut off in the winter?

A Yes. The Cold Weather Rule still allows electricity to be shut off for non-payment. You will only be protected if electricity provides your primary source of heat AND you have done all the following things:

- Your household income meets the state guidelines (at or less than 50 percent of the state median income)
- You provide Runestone Electric with a completed Inability to Pay Form; and
- You have a payment arrangement with the Co-op for which you have remained reasonably current

## Q If my electricity has been disconnected, how can I be reconnected?

A In order to re-establish power, contact Runestone Electric for the total balance due, which will include additional fees and a deposit.

## Q What must I do to receive shut-off protection?

A If you are behind in your electricity payments and you will not be able to catch up, your first step is to call Runestone Electric Association.

We don't want to shut off anyone's electricity. We will work with you to set up a payment arrangement or help you to see if you qualify for shut-off protection. At right is a list of providers that can help with your energy bills. It is up to you to contact them for help.

## Q Will you disconnect me without my knowledge?

A No. You will receive a "Notice of Disconnection." The letter will contain an income verification form for you to complete and return. There will also be a list of rights and responsibilities for you as well as the Cooperative and a list of agencies that may help you. If you receive a Notice of Disconnection, you MUST take the next step and call us and the agency that serves your county to see if they can help you.

We will not disconnect electricity without first notifying you by letter. We also attempt to make phone calls if we have correct phone numbers. We will not shut-off electricity on a Friday, a weekend, or the day before a holiday.

## Energy Assistance Providers

### Douglas, Grant, Pope and Stevens Counties:

West Central Minnesota Communities Action, Inc.  
(218) 685-4486  
1-800-492-4805

### Todd County:

Todd County Social Services  
(320) 732-4516  
1-888-838-4066

### Otter Tail County:

Mahube-Otwa Community Action Partnership, Inc.  
Detroit Lakes –  
(218) 847-1385  
Fergus Falls –  
(218) 739-3011  
1-888-458-1385

### Meeting your payment obligation

Please contact our office if you find that you cannot pay your electric bill. 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 winter.

Our members are important! We'd rather work with you to set up a payment plan than shut-off your electricity.

If you are in need of help, don't delay - call today: 320-762-1121 or 800-473-1722

## Active Duty Military Shut-off Protection

When a household member has been ordered into active duty, for deployment, or for a change of duty station, some customers 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. For more information or to apply for protection and set up a payment plan, please contact Runestone Electric. If a serviceman or woman and Runestone Electric cannot agree on a payment plan, you have the right to appeal to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Runestone Electric will not disconnect your service during the appeal process.

## Ring-a-ling...REA Calling!

You just sit down for supper and your phone rings. You pick it up and its a telemarketer. Robocalls from telemarketers can be very annoying. REA uses automated phone calls to alert members of planned power outages and to give payment reminders. We recommend adding our phone number **320-762-1121** to your contacts so you'll know it's REA calling and not a telemarketer.





# Cooperatives Support Their Communities!

## REA Newsline

Official monthly publication of  
Runestone Electric Association

6839 Power Lane SW  
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**

### Board of Directors

Barbara Johnson, President  
Clif Patrick, Vice President  
Ron Holm, Treasurer  
Gary (Andy) Anderson, Secretary  
Audrey Hjelle, Director  
Steve Pederson, Director  
Mike Loken, Director

### Editorial Staff

Kristin Dolan, CEO  
Sue Lundeen, Editor

### In case of a power outage

- 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.
- Never assume we know you are without power. Always call to report an outage.

▶ (651)454-0002 ▶ (800)252-1166

Click or Call Before You Dig!



Gopher State locates utility-owned underground facilities. REA will locate wires to the main meter. Wires from the meter to home and out buildings are private property and need to be located by a private contractor. **Private locators list:**

<http://www.gopherstateonecall.org/private-facility-locators>

***This institution is an equal opportunity provider***

## The Cooperative Principles



Representing some of the organizations receiving Operation Round Up® grants in September (front row l to r): Cheryl Kleven (Glenwood Retirement Village); Cindy Townsend (Alex Area Youth Trap League); Denise Kasper (Pleasant Valley Cemetery Association), and Cindy Levohl (Love INC of Douglas County). (back row l to r): Noel Bogatzki (Douglas County DAC); Grant Haugen (Veterans Memorial Park); Missy Schlosser (Glenwood Retirement Village); Chuck Nettetstad (UCAN-United Communities Advocating Non-Violence); Bob Friederichs (Friends of Nordic Meadow, Inc.); Vernon Hedlin (Norunga Cemetery Association); Ron Tschaekofske (Operation Round Up Board); Lynn Jenc (Alex Public Schools Community Ed); Vern Lorsung (Operation Round Up Board) and Brett Strandkov & Mya Santelman (Lakes Area Alpine Program).

Runestone Electric Association's Operation Round Up® has distributed over **\$906,000** in grants to community-minded groups and organizations throughout the Cooperative's service territory since its inception in 2003. Over 65% of REA's members allow their bills to be rounded up to the next dollar with the average yearly contribution of \$6.

The following twenty-two area organizations shared \$9,450 in grants from Operation Round Up.

### Fire Departments - First Responders

- Ashby Fire Department (\$1000)

### Youth

- Northern Lights Council BSA (\$300)
- West Central Area Schools (\$300)
- Osakis Boy Scouts (\$250)
- Alex Public Schools Community Ed (\$250)
- Brandon-Evansville Trap Team (\$200)
- Lakes Area Alpine Program (\$500)
- Alexandria Area Youth Trap League (\$250)

### Seniors

- Glenwood Retirement Village (\$500)

### Community

- Pleasant Valley Cemetery Association (\$250)
- Friends of Nordic Meadow, Inc. (\$500)
- Veterans Memorial Park (\$1000)
- Norunga Cemetery Association (\$250)
- UCAN - United Communities Advocating Non-Violence (\$500)
- Lake Amelia Cemetery (\$250)
- West Central Community Action (\$200)
- Douglas County DAC (\$750)
- St. Mary's Quilters Mission Group (\$200)
- Nora Lutheran Church Quilter (\$250)
- Douglas County Cemetery Association (\$250)
- The Village Family Service Center (\$500)

The deadline for the next round of funding is **November 5**. Application forms are available by calling Runestone Electric at (800) 473-1722 or downloaded at [www.RunestoneElectric.com](http://www.RunestoneElectric.com)