



Runestone Electric's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic Information on page 2



NEWSLINE

April 2020

In this Issue: COVID-19 Response pg 2 REA Operation Round Up Grant

POSTPONED: 84th Annual Meeting

In light of the current health situation facing our country, and in doing our part in helping slow the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, Runestone Electric Association (REA) has made the decision to postpone our Annual Meeting, which was to be held April 16 at the Alexandria Area High School.

Our bylaws allow for postponement or cancellation of the Annual Meeting. Voting for the District 7 director candidates will continue by mail only. There will be no on-site voting this year. We ask that members of District 7 vote by mail by the April 16th deadline (please see informaiton below). Instead of using tellers this year, ballots will be counted by Pemberton Law in Alexandria. Once certified, election results will be available on the REA website and published in the May issue of *Newsline*.

REA's 2020 scholarship winners will receive their certificates of achievement and other instructions by mail.

We thank you for understanding and send our sincere wishes for your welfare and safety during this challenging time.

A Message from REA'S Board President

Dear REA Members,

On March 20th, Kristin Dolan resigned from her position as CEO of Runestone Electric Association (REA). We thank Kris for her nearly five years of service to REA and wish her well in her future endeavors.

The REA Board of Directors has named Al Haman as interim CEO. Al is currently the CEO of STAR Energy Services LLC and is the Manager of Operations and Engineering at REA on a part-time contract. Because of REA's knowledgeable staff and very dedicated employees, Al will be able to be interim CEO on a part-time basis while continuing his responsibilities to STAR and the Operations and Engineering at REA. His knowledge of the cooperative and its employees will be a huge asset to him and us as he takes on this job. We welcome Al to this new responsibility. In the near future, we will begin the process of looking for a permanent CEO.

During this uncertain time with the COVID-19 pandemic, the REA Board of Directors is especially grateful to our employees. The energy industry is considered a critical infrastructure segment under Presidential Policy Directive 21 and the Department of Homeland Security, so our employees are continuing to report to work, despite the lobby being closed. Many of the employees have children at home, and with schools closed until at least May 4th, they have to juggle additional responsibilities. You can take comfort in knowing our employees do a fantastic job keeping the lights on and the cooperative running smoothly for you, our members.

Keep washing your hands, practicing social distancing, and stay well.

Barbara Johnson, REA Board President

Attention District 7 Members of REA!

Recently you received a mailing from REA regarding the Annual Meeting. With the postponement of the Annual Meeting due to the COVID-19 restrictions, there will be no on-site voting this year. Voting will continue by mail only. We ask that you mail your ballot in the postage-paid envelope provided to you with the annual report. Ballots must be postmarked by the April 16, 2020 deadline. As always, REA is here to serve our members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Runestone Electric Association is committed to providing reliable electric service. As the coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to spread, the co-op is taking extra precautions to protect the health and well-being of its employees, members and general public. We have chosen to make the following business changes to keep our employees and members safe.

Here's what you need to know:

The REA lobby is temporarily closed to the public

The Runestone Electric Association lobby will be closed to the public until further notice. Serving our members remains our number one priority as we provide ongoing customer service while taking precautions to protect our members and employees.

As always, if you experience a power outage or other emergency, please call REA at 800-473-1722. We have a 24-hour service to take your call.

Internal office operations will continue as usual, and due dates will remain the same.

We encourage members to call us at 800-473-1722 with questions and use our website to download information, such as rebate forms.

We encourage members to pay their utility bills by using one of the following options:

- » Mail the payment
- » Pay online
- » Pay by phone
- » Use the drive-up drop box on the east side of our parking lot

Learn more about payment options at www.RunestoneElectric.com

REA is working to meet the needs of our members

REA is continuing normal office and field operations. We are still here to answer questions.

Call us anytime: 800-473-1722 or visit our website: www.RunestoneElectric.com

The REA Annual Meeting is postponed

REA has made the decision to postpone our Annual Meeting, which was to be held April 16 at the Alexandria Area High School.

Our bylaws allow for postponement or cancellation of the Annual Meeting. Voting for the District 7 director candidates will continue by mail only. There will be no on-site voting this year. We ask that members of District 7 vote by mail before the April 16th deadline. Once certified, election results will be available on this website and published in the May issue of the Cooperative's newsletter, Newslines.

REA's 2020 scholarship winners will receive their certificates of achievement and other instructions by mail.

Will this affect my power?

No, as of right now, line crews will be working as usual. The on-call crew will always remain on-call to respond to any power outages or emergencies. You can report your outage by calling us 24/7 at 800-473-1722. Visit our Outage Center at www.RunestoneElectric.com to learn more.

What if I'm having trouble paying my bill?

We recognize the financial hardship some members may face due to the outbreak. We encourage any member who is facing financial difficulty to call us at 800-473-1722 or email us at rea@runestoneelectric.com.

This is a rapidly-evolving situation and we will address the challenges as they occur. But know that we are here to keep the lights on. We thank you for your patience and understanding during this time.

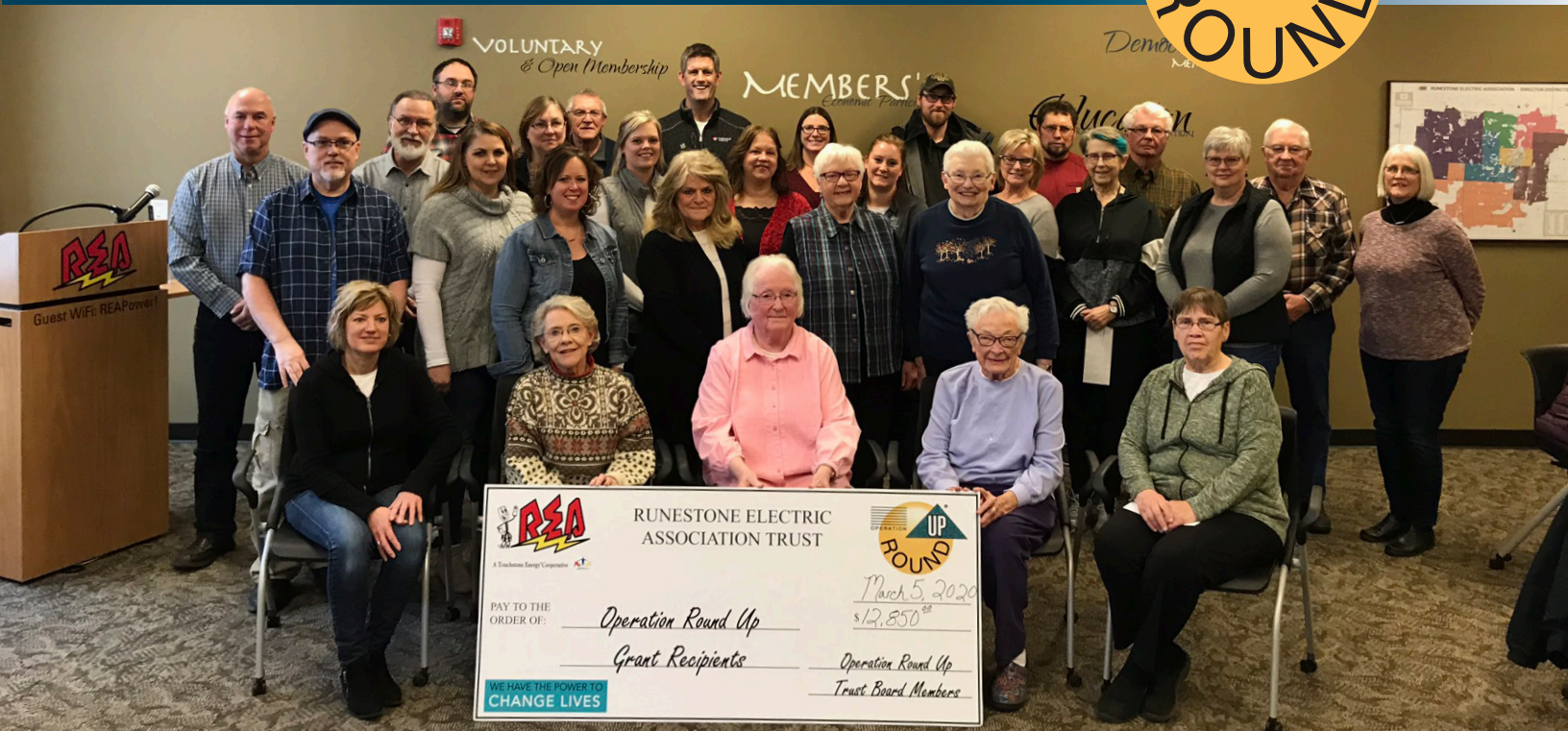
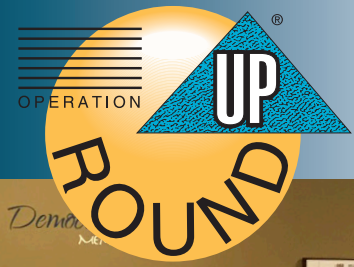
As always, REA is only a call away!

800-473-1722

REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - February 2020

- » Mrs. Nelson reviewed the Financial Report for January 2020 noting January energy sales were down from the prior two Januarys. Expenses, including power cost were under budget, resulting in a margin ahead of budget for the month. The revenue deferred from 2019 will be amortized 1/12 each month of 2020.
- » Mrs. Lundeen informed the Board that Vern Lorsung had completed his term on the Operation Round Up® Trust Board. Director Loken offered the name of David Lundy to serve as representative for District 5 on the Trust Board. Mr. Lundy will serve two three-year terms from 2020 - 2025.
- » Approved new Member Advisory Council members: Tait & Melissa Stueve (District 1), Jim Penkivech (District 1), Tony & Mary Wright (District 3), Bill & Barb Little (District 3), Jerome & Rita Kostreba (District 4), Thomas Kummrow (District 4), David Lemmon (District 4), Steve Loken (District 5), and Belvin & Joellen Doebbert (District 7).
- » Approved Cogeneration and Small Power Production Rate Schedules, Policy BD-11 Rules Governing the Election of Directors, and Policy BD-10 Procedures for Tellers.
- » **The regular April Board Meeting will be April 30, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.**

When Neighbors Help Neighbors, Small Change Can Change Lives!



Representing some of the organizations receiving Operation Round Up® grants in August (front row l to r): Lynn Strandskov (Lakes Area Alpine Program); Marcia Gae Schmidt (Alexandria Senior Center); Shirley Ross (Alexandria Senior Quilters); Kathryn LeBrosseur (Alexandria Senior Center) and Shirley Zemke (Hearts and Hands Food Shelf). (middle row l to r): Fred Wittenberg (Central Square, Inc.); Molly Baune and Amanda Miller (Alexandria MN Young Life); Sandy Susag (Central Lakes Symphony); Judy Anderson (Pope County Triad); Marjorie Engebretson (Glenwood City Cemetery); Mary Nortman (Someplace Safe); and Julie Olmscheid (The Caring & Sharing Room). (back row l to r): Jeff Gaffaney and Rod Borden (Operation Round Up Board); David McArdle (Hoffman Economic Development Authority); Cheryl Gebhardt (B-E High School Trap Team); Vern Lorsung (Operation Round Up Board); Brandi Gruchow (WCA Genius Hour); Tim Urness (D-O-U-G-L-A-S County Challenge); Robi Bowman (Morris Area Post Prom); Amy Olinger (Central Lakes Symphony); Katie Lence (West Central MN Communities Action); Dustin Palmarsheim (Leaf Valley First Responders); Vicki Gessel (Kid's Ground Water Festival); Pete Olmscheid (Caring & Sharing Room); Don Semerad (Alexandria Senior Center); Howard Jaeck (Stevens County Food Shelf); and Deborah Anderson (Operation Round Up Board).

Operation Round Up Donates \$12,850 to Local Nonprofits

Runestone Electric Association's Operation Round Up® has distributed over \$991,500 in grants to community-minded groups and organizations throughout the Cooperative's service territory since its inception in 2003. Over 64% of REA's members allow their bills to be rounded up to the next dollar, with the average yearly contribution of \$6.

The following thirty-eight area organizations shared \$12,850 in grants from Operation Round Up.

Fire Departments & First Responders: Leaf Valley Township Fire Department (\$500).

Food Shelf: Stevens County Food Shelf (\$300); Long Prairie Food Pantry (\$300); Outreach Food Shelf (\$500); Hearts and Hands Food Shelf (\$500); HK Area Food Shelf (\$500) and Grant County Food Shelf (\$500).

Youth: Morris Area Post Prom (\$200); Brandon Evansville Post Prom (\$200); Alexandria Area High School Senior Graduation Party (\$250); Central Square, Inc. (\$250); WCA Post Prom (\$200); Toys for Kids (\$500); Osakis After Prom (\$200); Discovery Days Preschool (\$250); Kid's Water Festival (\$250); Alexandria MN Young Life (\$250); Brandon-Evansville High School Trap Team (\$200); WCA

Genius Hour (\$300); Alexandria Youth Cycling/Big Ole Bike Club (\$200); Lakes Area Alpine Program (\$200) and Alexandria Girls Fast Pitch (\$250).

Community: Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 235 (\$250); Central Lakes Symphony (\$250); Someplace Safe (\$750); D-O-U-G-L-A-S County Challenge (\$200); Wendell Legion & Auxiliary (\$300); The Caring & Sharing Room (\$500); Monday Quilters of Osakis Lutheran Church (\$200); Glenwood City Cemetery (\$250); Rock Prairie WELCA (\$200); West Central MN Communities Action (\$1000); Hoffman Economic Development Authority (\$500); Stevens County HRA (\$200) and The Salvation Army (\$500).

Seniors: Alexandria Senior Center (\$500); Pope County (\$350) and Alexandria Senior Quilters (\$200).

Calling all nonprofit organizations!

Area organizations are encouraged to apply for Operation Round Up grants. The deadline for the next round of funding is May 1, 2019. Application forms are available by calling REA at (800) 473-1722. Applications can be downloaded from the REA website: www.RunestoneElectric.com.

What to Know Before You Dig

As the frost leaves the ground and we gear up for spring digging projects, keep this in mind:

Always call 811 before you dig to have a professional come to your home and locate buried PUBLIC utility lines free of charge. No matter the size of a digging project, if you come into contact with a buried power line, you could be electrocuted or seriously injured.

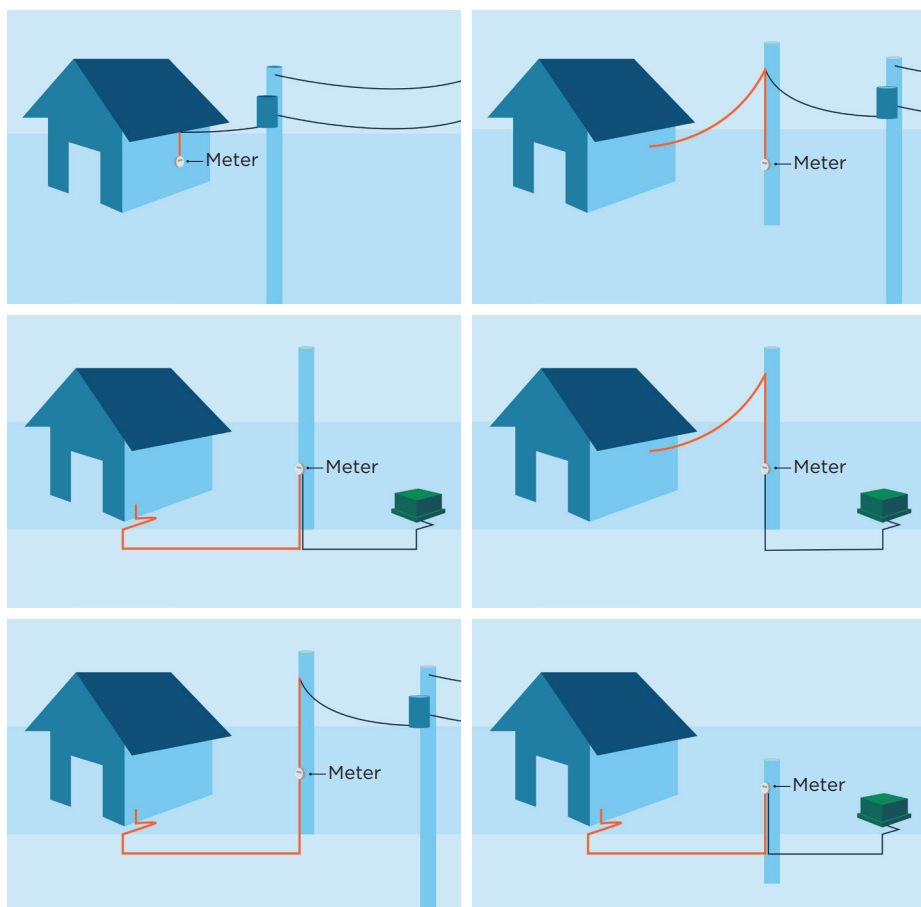
Member-Owned Powerlines

Remember that utility power lines will be marked for free, up to your main meter. Underground powerlines from your main meter inward, however, are the responsibility of the member. Property owners need to call an electrician or a powerline locating company to have their private lines marked. A list of private powerline locators can be found on Gopher State One Call's website.

Check out the graphics below to see who owns what. **Member-owned powerlines are marked in orange in the graphics.**

Member's Wire

REA's Wire



If you are planning a digging project more than one foot in depth, it is YOUR responsibility to notify Gopher State One Call who will notify all parties that may have underground facilities in the area.

When you call, please have the following information ready:

- » Who is doing the digging and their phone number?
- » Type of work being done?
- » For whom the work is being done?
- » Street address or township, section and quarter where work will be done?

NEWSLINE

The Official Monthly publication of Runestone Electric Association.

6839 Power Lane SW
Alexandria, MN 56308

320-762-1121
Fax: 320-763-4149

rea@runestoneelectric.com
www.RunestoneElectric.com

24/7: 800-473-1722

Office Hours:
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mon- Fri.

Memorial Day to Labor Day:
7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mon- Fri.

Board of Directors

- District 1: Gary (Andy) Anderson, Secretary
- District 2: Barbara Johnson, President
- District 3: Audrey Hjelle, Director
- District 4: Dave Staples, Director
- District 5: Mike Loken, Treasurer
- District 6: Clif Patrick, Vice President
- District 7: Brad Burklund, Director

Editorial Staff

- Al Haman, Interim CEO
- Sue Lundeen, Editor
- Allly Coleman, Communications Specialist

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 a corded phone or a charged cell 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.

REA is an Equal Opportunity Provider



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Call 811 or
visit gopherstateonecall.org
before you dig

