



We are working to meet the needs of our members.

We are here to be better than you expect us to be through the good times, the bad times, and the uncertain times.



NEWSLINE

June 2020

In this Issue: **Air Source Heat Pumps** pg 3 **Community Solar** pg 4

COVID-19 Update

Serving our members is our priority

Although the shelter in place order has lifted, as an essential service we need healthy employees to care for your needs. With this in mind, our lobby remains closed to the public for now. We appreciate your flexibility during these unusual times and we hope to open our lobby soon. Serving our members remains our number one priority as we provide ongoing customer service while taking precautions to protect our members and employees.

REA is continuing normal office and field operations. We are still here to answer questions and help you with your needs. Please call 800-473-1722 or email rea@runestoneelectric.com.

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.

We encourage members to pay their electric 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 our parking lot

Learn more about payment options at www.RunestoneElectric.com

Trouble paying your 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. We will work with you to set up payment arrangements.

Pancake Feed Canceled

With the cancellation of the Minnesota State Fair and surrounding county fairs due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the REA Board of Directors has canceled the REA Member Appreciation Pancake Feed scheduled for August 22. We will miss seeing our members but the safety of all is most important. We hope to continue the tradition of the REA Pancake Feed in 2021.



Summer Storm Season is upon us

Here's what you need to know:

While we certainly hope that this summer brings nice weather, it is always a good idea to be prepared. If a power outage occurs, we'll work to restore your service as quickly as possible, always keeping safety as a priority.

Remember these important tips:

- » To report an outage, call 800-473-1722
- » Stay away from ALL downed powerlines and report them as quickly as possible. Always treat them as if they are energized because you don't know if they are electrified or not.
- » Stay clear of puddles, fences, trees or any objects that are in contact with a downed powerline.
- » Turn off your heating/AC equipment and unplug electronic appliances, TVs, gaming systems, computers, etc to protect from voltage fluctuations that may occur while the electricity is being restored.
- » To maintain cold temperatures, keep your refrigerators and freezers closed.

No more landline?

Please keep your phone number(s) updated to make outage reporting easier and to allow us to update you with outage information.

Ring-a-ling...REA Calling!

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.



Al Haman,
Interim CEO

A Note from the Interim CEO: Coal Creek Station to Close in 2022

Al Haman, Interim CEO, Runestone Electric Association

Great River Energy announced in early May plans to shut down Coal Creek Station in 2022. Great River Energy is Runestone Electric's wholesale power supplier. Retiring Coal Creek Station is part of Great River Energy's plans to phase out coal-fired power plants, add significant renewable energy, and explore

critical grid-scale battery technology.

Here is a quick overview of Great River Energy's plans in the coming years:

- Retire the 1,151-megawatt (MW) Coal Creek Station in the second half of 2022
- Add 1,100 MW of wind energy purchases by the end of 2023
- Modify the 99-MW, coal and natural gas-based Spiritwood Station combined heat and power plant to be fueled by natural gas
- Install a 1-MW, long-duration battery demonstration system
- Support the repowering of the Blue Flint ethanol biorefinery with natural gas

Moving away from baseload coal-fired generation may seem risky, but Great River Energy is prepared to keep our energy affordable, reliable, and environmentally responsible. Great River Energy plans to use long-term wind energy contracts, upgrades to its fleet of modern

natural gas peaking plants, and purchases from the MISO energy market to meet the power supply needs of electric cooperatives like Runestone Electric. Great River Energy is also working on a 1-MW battery with a discharge period of 150 hours, far longer than the four-hour discharge period common among lithium-ion batteries. With these changes, Great River Energy's power supply resources will be more than 95% carbon dioxide-free, and wholesale electric rates are expected to be reduced.

The announcement of the closing of Coal Creek may hit a personal note with some of our members. Over the past forty-six years, busloads of REA members have made the annual trek to Underwood, ND, aboard the Coal Creek Tour. Through the years, the tour has included stops at the Falkirk Mine, Garrison Dam, riverboat cruises, historic visitor centers, and many folks had their photos taken with the iconic buffalo in Jamestown.

We are sad to see this chapter of REA history come to a close. It has been a pleasure educating our members on where their power comes from and building an appreciation of what it takes to ensure the lights come on when you flip a switch. In the future, we hope to offer other informative energy-related tours for our members.

Pancake Feed Canceled

On another disappointing note, with the cancellation of the Minnesota State Fair and surrounding county fairs, the REA Board of Directors has canceled the 27th Annual Member Appreciation Pancake Feed set for August 22nd. We look forward to Chris Cakes flipping pancakes for us again in 2021.



REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - April 2020

- » Mrs. Nelson reviewed the Financial Report for March 2020 noting first quarter 2020 sales and electric revenue are under budget due to the mild weather start to the year. Year-to-date margin is ahead of budget, as operating expenses, particularly right-of-way clearing, are behind budgeted expense.
- » Appointed District 3 Director Audrey Hjelle and District 6 Director Clif Patrick to continue to serve until confirmation can be made at the Annual Meeting.
- » Postponed the 84th Annual Meeting until restrictions in place by the Governors' Executive Orders are lifted.
- » Interim CEO Haman gave an update on REA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic reporting the Cooperative is operating as usual despite the lobby being closed to the public, and that REA did not apply for the Paycheck Protection Program.
- » Selected Director Anderson to serve as REA's representative on STAR Energy Services Board of Governors.
- » Mr. Rooney provided a briefing on the load control device replacement project set to begin in the coming months.
- » **The regular June Board Meeting will be June 30, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.**

The Advantage of Heating with an Air Source Heat Pump

So often we take air conditioning for granted. When it's hot outside, we simply step into our comfortable air conditioned homes or businesses. However, when our air conditioner is not working – that's a problem. Whether you are looking for a new air conditioner because yours is broken, or if you are simply upgrading your older, inefficient system, consider an air source heat pump.

ASHPs act like a central air conditioner in the summer time, but they can also provide heating and cooling in one efficient and economical package that looks like a central air conditioning unit.

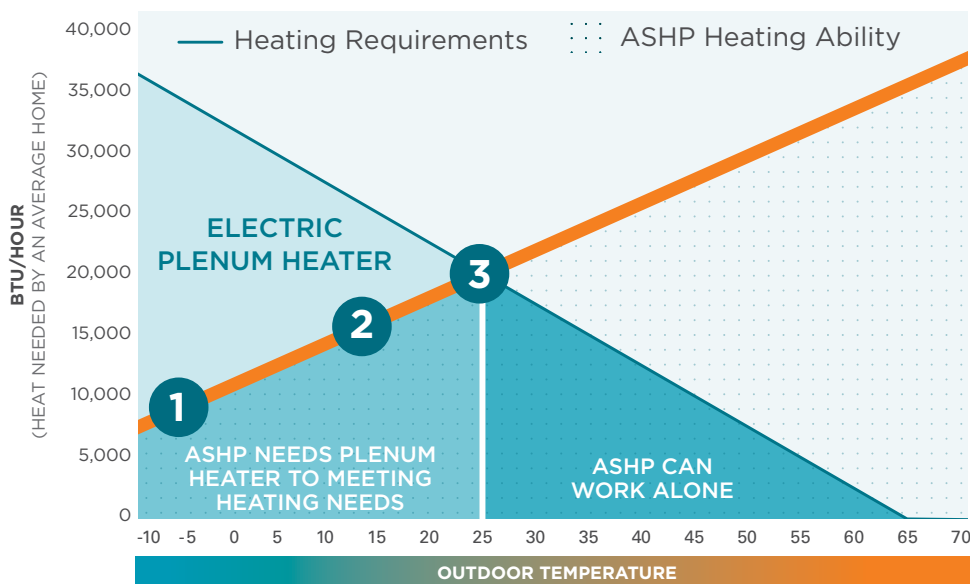
When properly installed, in the winter, an ASHP can deliver 1 1/2 to 3 times more heat energy to a home than the electrical energy it consumes.

In the summer, ASHPs operate like a central air conditioner. In the winter, ASHPs can heat your home by transferring heat energy from the outside air and bringing it indoors.

See Rates and Rebates

Contact REA for more information on air source heat pumps or visit www.RunestoneElectric.com.

ADVANTAGES OF AN AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP (ASHP)



1. At -5°, an ASHP still 100% efficient
2. ASHP is 200% efficient and 1/2 price of LP at 15°
3. At 25°, an ASHP is nearly 250% as efficient as traditional heat options

Cooling Rates & Rebates

Rates

Air Source Heat Pump
With automatic back-up 7.24¢/kWh
(Or lower depending on complimentary dual fuel system)

Geothermal heat pump
With automatic back-up 6.04¢/kWh

With off-peak heating, off-peak rates may apply to electric water heating.

Rebates

Quality Installation Program

Air Source Heat Pump:

- SEER 14.5 \$480
- SEER 15 \$580
- SEER 16+ \$630

Central Air Conditioning:

- SEER 14.5 \$50
- SEER 15 \$50
- SEER 16+ \$50

Ductless Air Source Heat Pump
(Must be Energy Star® Rated) \$200

Geothermal Heat Pumps \$400

Air Source Heat Pump Paired with Plenum Heater or Boiler
Efficiency Rebate \$100

Electronically Commutated Motor (ECM) \$25

Smart Thermostat \$25

Air Conditioner Tune-up \$25

Cycled Air Conditioning

Bill credit in June, July and August \$7.50

All rates and rebates are subject to change.

Take this educational quiz for a chance to win a \$500 bill credit PLUS learn the benefits of a Air Source Heat Pump.

Take this short Air Source Heat Pump quiz at www.energywisemn.com/quiz for a chance to win a \$500 energy credit. This promotion will run until July 1, 2020. No purchase is necessary.

ENERGY WISE  MN

Heat pumps are more popular than you may think. Your neighbor probably has one!

179
Ground Source
Heat Pumps

1,006
Air Source
Heat Pumps

Heat Pumps Installed by REA Members as of May 2020

Is Your Electric Heat still on?

REA recommends checking boiler and baseboard heating systems to ensure they are turned off. This easy step can prevent a battle between your cooling and heating system, especially in basements.

Save money and energy this summer by turning off the heat!



Plan ahead for new services

If you plan upgrades or new services, especially if large fans for drying are involved, please contact REA as soon as possible. This is helpful because the delivery time for large transformers can be lengthy. In addition, line crews already have a number of projects planned and the schedule gets especially tight later in the summer. Please call and ask for the Operations Department.

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.

May 4 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, Vice President
- District 4: Dave Staples, Director
- District 5: Mike Loken, Treasurer
- District 6: Clif Patrick, Director
- District 7: Matthew Mattson, Director

Editorial Staff

- Al Haman, Interim CEO
- Sue Lundeen, Editor
- Ally 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

Considering Solar? REA's Community Solar makes it *EASY!*



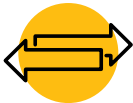
Here are 4 reasons REA's Community Solar is a GREAT option:



Comparative pricing to installing solar at your home



\$1,020 all costs included - no worry, no hassle,
NO MAINTENANCE



Transferable - can be given or sold to any REA member



Choice - purchase output from 1 panel or up to your annual energy usage

Visit www.runestoneelectric.com for more information

Cogeneration Notice

In compliance with Minnesota Statute 216B.1611, Runestone Electric Association is updating the technical requirements for distributed energy resource (DER) interconnections. The existing technical requirement document will be replaced with the Technical Interconnection and Interoperability Requirements (TIIR) and Technical Specification Manual (TSM). These new documents can be found after June 1, 2020, on www.runestoneelectric.com. These requirements become effective July 1, 2020 and all new DER systems and DER system additions applied for interconnection after July 1st will be required to meet these updated requirements.



Dehumidifier Basics

Using a dehumidifier to suck moisture out of the air can cost more than \$100 a year on electric bills. Consider replacing a standard dehumidifier with an energy efficient Energy Star® model. Replace your old dehumidifier with an Energy Star unit and receive a \$25 rebate from REA.

Contact REA at 800-473-1722 for a rebate form or visit www.RunestoneElectric.com.

Know what's below, Call before you dig!



Call 811 or visit gopherstateonecall.org before you dig