



# REA WISHES YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A *Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!*

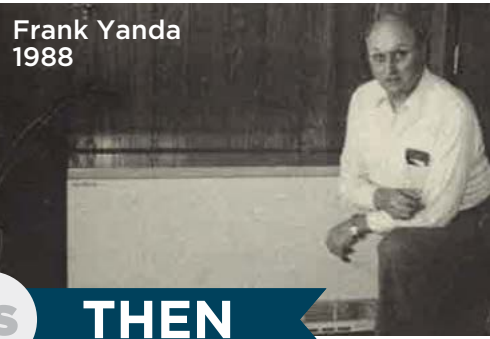
REA will be closed December 25 and January 1.  
To report a power outage or an emergency, call (800) 473-1722.  
We have a 24-hour answering service to take your call.

## NEWSLINE

December 2020

In this Issue: **Space Heater Safety** pg 3 • **Room Storage Heaters** pg 3

### CLEAN, SAFE and EFFICIENT **ELECTRIC HEAT!**



**NOW VS THEN**

### ... Even 32 years later!

Above is a headline from the February 1988 REA Newsletter. The article featured Frank Yanda and his storage heater (photo on the right). The article reads, "Frank and Adeline Yanda of rural Alexandria, installed two storage heaters in December, 1986. These heaters represent 50% of their existing baseboard heating capacity. In just 11 months, they saved over \$440 in heating and water heating costs."

Fast forward 30 some years. REA hosts the #PowerOn giveaway in which we gave away three \$50 bill credits to members who submitted a photo and description of how they #PowerOn. The Chlian's were chosen as one of the winners with their submission:

"Hi, We are responding to an article in the latest REA Newsline. We have perhaps, an unusual story about saving money by using off-peak electric heat.

This picture is of Carolyn (Yanda) Chlian holding a copy of the REA News from 1988, in front of the same storage heater her Dad (Frank Yanda) is pictured with. The article about electric storage heat was included in the February 1988 newsletter stating the Yanda's had saved \$440 in 11 months because of two storage heaters they had installed in their home.

My wife and I are using the same heater for backup heat in our home when our baseboard electric heat is managed by REA during periods of high demand. The heater has never required repair and continues to work great after 32 years of use. Another benefit of using electric heat.

Thank you for continuing to provide dependable, economical electric service to our area."

We thank John and Carolyn Chlian for sharing their #PowerOn story that highlights the long lasting benefits of electric storage heat!

For more information on electric storage heat, check out the story on page 3.

## Attention High School Seniors!

### It's Time to Apply!

Apply for one of ten \$1,000 scholarships available through a random drawing.

Scholarship applicants must be a graduating high school senior whose parents or legal guardians are members of REA. Students attending public, private, parochial or home school are eligible to apply. The deadline to apply for the REA scholarships is March 1, 2021. Winners will be announced in April.

**New this year!** Scholarship applications can be filled out online at [www.runestoneelectric.com](http://www.runestoneelectric.com). If you're unable to fill out the application online, call the office for an application at 800-473-1722.



**Al Haman**  
CEO

## A Note from your CEO Reflections on 2020

I'm sure many of you can relate when I say that 2020 has been a year of highs and lows for us here at Runestone Electric Association (REA) as we all deal with the limitations and challenges that face us due to the coronavirus. I thought it would be good this month to reflect on the past year.

To say that the past nine months have been crazy would be an understatement. We had just closed the REA lobby to the public due to Covid-19 restrictions when I accepted the interim CEO position in March. Thankfully we were able to reopen the lobby in June with safety precautions in place.

With direction from the REA Board of Directors, the decision was made to postpone the annual meeting in April with hopes of holding the meeting in the fall. Unfortunately, that was not to be, and for the first time in REA history, the annual meeting was canceled. Director elections were possible with mail-in voting, and we welcomed Matthew Mattson as the new District 7 director. Incumbent directors Audrey Hjelle (District 3) and Clif Patrick (District 7) were re-elected for three-year terms.

In keeping with the theme of 2020, the summer was stormy with two devastating tornadoes in our service territory's western areas. Summer storms also brought a great deal of lightning and wind. In reviewing our outage counts for 2020, trees continue to be the number one cause of outages. In 2020, we have spent \$850,000 on right-of-way clearing, and we plan to continue this aggressive approach into 2021.

Right-of-way clearing is just one of the many methods used to improve system reliability and keep your lights on. Maintaining and making improvements to the distribution system keeps our Operations Department busy year-round. Here are just a few of the many projects completed in 2020: changed out 726 poles, plowed in 18 miles of new underground cable, converted over 10 miles of overhead wire to underground cable, changed out 220 old transformers, added 183 new electric services, and much more.

The stormy summer kept our Energy Management Department busy with standby generator inquiries and installations. We offer a turnkey installation and maintenance service exclusively for REA members. The Energy Management Department also led the way with several beneficial electrification projects, including a fast electric vehicle charger installed at the Simonson's Station in Alexandria and the donation of a self-contained hydroponic container for indoor agriculture education at West Central Area Schools in Barrett. This fall, REA was recognized by ReCharge Minnesota, along with several other organizations across the state, for the education and promotion of zero-emission (electric) vehicles. Here is something else to make you smile, REA's EnergyWise programs have saved members over \$2.7 million in the last 12 months.

Speaking of smiling, Operation Round Up surpassing \$1 million in grants to non-profit and community service programs is truly an accomplishment for which the members of REA deserve thanks and much appreciation. With 65% of REA members contributing an average of \$6 per year, it proves that small change can have a big impact. Thank you to all of our members who participate in Operation Round Up!

I also want to thank members for being diligent in paying their bills, especially during these difficult times. REA offers various payment options, including automatic payment plans, online payments, credit cards, over the phone, by mail, utilizing our drive-up dropbox, and in person. Be sure to contact our office if you are having difficulty paying your electric bill. We want to work with you to set up a payment plan to avoid a large balance in the future.

As we prepare for the new year ahead, I want you to know that your electric cooperative is in good financial shape. We will end 2020 with healthy financials and strong margins.

On a personal note, I want to thank the Board of Directors for placing confidence in me as your next CEO. The expressions of support from them, the great employees at REA, my professional colleagues, and you, the members, has been humbling. I will work very hard on your behalf to carefully build upon the great legacy of REA and make sure we evolve to meet your future needs.

### REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - October 2020

- » CEO Haman reviewed the Financial Report for September 2020. He noted September energy sales were down, but expenses were also down, resulting in a monthly margin greater than budgeted. We recorded the second GRE COVID-19 relief as a reduction to power cost and a credit to members through the WPCA on the September bills.
- » CEO Haman reviewed the 2019 Key Ratio Trend Analysis (KRTA) report.
- » As part of the Legal Report, Attorney Johnson proposed moving the District Meetings and Annual Meeting to later in the year in

hopes Covid restrictions will have improved. The Board directed staff to prepare a plan for the District Meetings and Annual Meeting for the November Board meeting.

- » Mr. Rooney reviewed the load control replacement project, REA's generator program, the Center for Energy and the Environment (CEE) air source heat pump study, and the Net Zero Dairy Energy study.
- » **The regular December Board Meeting will be December 22, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.**

# Space Heaters Can Dramatically Increase your Electric Bill

Use the formula below to determine what the monthly cost of operating a space heater will be before you plug it in.

Example for a 1,500 watt space heater:

(wattage divided by 1,000) x hours used x cost per kWh = cost per day

Example: (1,500 watts ÷ 1,000) x 24 hours x 11.18¢ (REA's rate Sept - May) = \$4.02 per day

To calculate a monthly cost multiply your cost per day by number of days in the month.

\$4.02 x 30 days = \$120.74. This is your cost per month.

**Bottom line: space heaters are convenient, but expensive to use!**



## LOOK UP & LIVE!

Before you climb that ladder to string outdoor lights, check for overhead power lines nearby. Make sure tree limbs are not growing among power lines, since they can also become energized. Remember to keep at least 10 feet away from overhead lines at all times.

*Have a safe and happy holiday season!*

# DID YOU KNOW

## Room Storage Heaters

- » Can be easily installed in remodeling projects and existing homes or businesses.
- » A great choice as a back-up heating source for electric baseboard heaters.
- » A fan circulates heat from the bricks within the heater to heat the room.
- » Each room storage heater is individually controlled so you can adjust the temperature of each room.
- » No duct work is required.

**Rebate** - \$50/kw up to \$5,000 or 100kw

**Rates** - Dual Fuel 6.04\$/kWh (back up system)  
ETS 4.69\$/kWh (primary heating system)

*For more information on pricing, sizing and program details, please contact the REA Energy Management Department at 800-473-1722 or email [rea@runestoneelectric.com](mailto:rea@runestoneelectric.com)*

## Space Heater Safety Tips

Use the tips below to keep your home safe

**DO:** Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.

**DO:** Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.

**DO:** Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

**DO:** Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.

**DO:** Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.

**DON'T:** Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.

**DON'T:** Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to overheat, and can be a tripping hazard.

**DON'T:** Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.

**DON'T:** Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.

**DON'T:** Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.



# DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT

## Clif Patrick

REA District Six Director Clif Patrick represents eastern townships in REA's service territory. In addition to being an REA director, Clif is passionate about the environment and loves being outdoors. Read more about Clif below:



### How many years have you been on the board?

I have been on the board for 7 years. I represent the townships of Belle River, Leslie, Osakis, Hudson, Orange, Leven and Westport.

### Where do you live?

I live in Hudson Township, 7 miles north of Villard or 3 miles east of Forada.

### Where is your hometown/high school?

I graduated from Villard High School, went to college at North Dakota State University and then on to Vietnam for a year.

### Tell us about your family.

I am divorced and I have one son, Joshua, who lives in Bloomington.

### What is your passion as a board member?

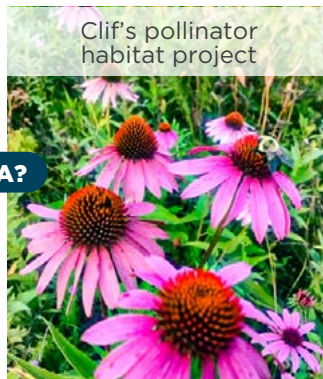
When I ran for the board seven years ago, I had three things that motivated me: mercury, carbon, and distributed generation. Great River Energy (Runestone's power supplier) has not only moved the dial but has changed the paradigm, with being mostly carbon-free and mercury-free in the foreseeable future, and they will be using more alternative energy sources. In my last two years on the board, I want to focus on building up Runestone's electric vehicle network. I'd also like to encourage members to become more involved with our co-op such as the Member Advisory Council, Operation Round Up, or better yet, becoming a director!

### What's your favorite REA program?

Well, of course, Operation Round Up comes to mind first, but I'm also very encouraged by REA's Energy Management programs, both off-peak and Energy Wise programs.

### What keeps you busy outside of being a director for REA?

Well, I keep an eye on the boys at the Villard Cenex 10 o'clock coffee group in the morning. I'm a biker in the summer, and I cross country ski and snowshoe in the winter. But one of my favorite activities is my pollinator habitat projects. It's been really fun!



### What is something others might not know about you?

I've been to seven continents, and I've worked on four continents, including the United States. And of course, the wind generator sitting on the tower here in my yard that was salvaged from one of the downed power lines towers from the powerline protest days down by Paynesville.

### What is the best advice you've either given or received?

You have one mouth and two ears. Listen more than you speak.

### Three words that best describe you:

Two words: I CARE!

### BONUS Questions:

Tractors - Red or Green?  
I have them all - Allis-Chalmers, Farmall and John Deere

Lefsa - Sugar or No Sugar?  
Lots of butter and sugar

Do you say Wash or Wash?  
Wash

## NEWSLINE

The official monthly publication of Runestone Electric Association.

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### 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, 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



Recycle your old Christmas lights & power cords at the Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Recycle Center, ALP, REA, Osakis True Value, or Ace Hardware Glenwood & Alexandria. Accepted until 1/31/21.

