

**Make Safety A Priority  
This Planting Season.  
ALWAYS look up  
and live!**



Photo credit: Deb Johnson, Evansville

# NEWSLINE

May 2021

In this Issue: **District Meetings** pg 3 • **Call Before You Dig** pg 4

## Capital Credits are REA Members' Ownership in the Cooperative

Capital credit checks were mailed the end of April to the last known address that REA has for the membership. Please be sure to contact our office with updated address information. If you received a check for an REA member who is now deceased, please contact the REA office at 800-473-1722 or email [rea@runestoneelectric.com](mailto:rea@runestoneelectric.com).

For more information on capital credits, visit [www.runestoneelectric.com/about-rea/capital-credits](http://www.runestoneelectric.com/about-rea/capital-credits)

## Congratulations to REA Scholarship Winners

*We wish you the very best!*

REA's Scholarship Program is funded through unclaimed capital credits. This is money that would otherwise be claimed by the state of Minnesota. Scholarship applicants are required to have a parent or legal guardian that is a member of REA. Winners were determined through a random drawing.



**Maya Klimek**  
Parents: Brian &  
Nicole Klimek  
*Alexandria*



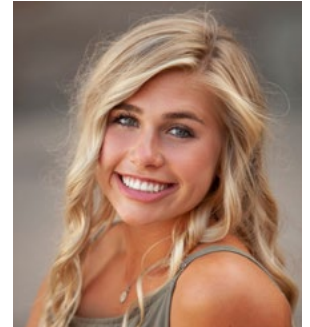
**Jordan Nord**  
Parents: David &  
Brenda Nord  
*Alexandria*



**Morgan Hungness**  
Parents: Darren &  
Kathy Hungness  
*Alexandria*



**Dylan Wagner**  
Parents: Shawn &  
Stephanie Wagner  
*Evansville*



**Whitly Netland**  
Parents: Jeremy &  
Heather Netland  
*Alexandria*



**Ashlee Drewes**  
Parents: Troy Drewes  
& Jessica Quinn  
*Farwell*



**Collin Crismon**  
Parents: Craig &  
Jenny Crismon  
*Watertown, SD*



**Jaycee Spaulding**  
Parents: Sarah  
Spaulding & Andy Bye  
*Alexandria*



**Darius Fenske**  
Parents: Mark &  
Janet Fenske  
*Boyd, MN*



**Jade Lent**  
Parents: Craig &  
Carol DeJong  
*Glenwood*



**Al Haman**  
CEO

# A Note from your CEO

## Communication is Key When Restoring Outages

In my office at REA, you'll find those things typical of most any office or workspace: laptop, monitors, mobile devices, personal reminders of loved ones, and some artifacts of past experiences. I also have a two-way radio that is used for internal communications with the employees in the field.

I've noticed a significant increase in radio traffic as our construction season begins to ramp up. The linemen communicate switching and lock-out/tag-out procedures, inform each other of hazards, and they keep the office informed as they perform their job duties safely. Along with the warming weather comes the threat of summer storms and outages. We have several tools and strategies to make outage restoration as fast and efficient as possible.

First, our phones are answered by member service representatives during regular working hours. After hours, we transfer our phone lines to an after-hours call answering service specializing in handling power outage calls. Generally, they, too, will have a live person answering your call. However, from time to time, during high call volumes, your phone call may be handled by an automated computer system that uses caller ID to look up account information. Keeping phone number(s) updated that you typically call from will speed up entering your outage into the database.

Once a phone call is logged, we use a software application to manage the outage calls. The software begins to analyze the known outage spots within the REA distribution grid, looking for relationships. The more calls we receive, the better! The goal is for the software to predict the most likely source of the outage and display it on a real-time map that our linemen and dispatchers can use to most quickly travel to and begin repairs. Once on the map, iPads in trucks can deliver turn-by-turn directions and routing to the suspected location.

Our metering system has the capability for us to perform a power check. Once we become aware of an outage, individual meters can be manually 'pinged' to determine the extent of an outage. Unfortunately, the system cannot

automatically initiate this routine, so we are dependent upon phone calls to start the process.

The software also updates a public outage map on REA's website. The map is a good resource for people to see how significant or widespread we are predicting an outage. Other statistics are calculated by the software, many of which we will communicate to the general public via our website, Facebook, or press releases to local media.

The vast majority of day-to-day outages happen in small groups. Often, we will go an entire weekend with one or two outages. During regular working hours, we dispatch a maintenance crew to the site of an outage. After hours we have two linemen designated as on-call who respond. If multiple outages are happening, a second two-lineman crew is called in. If we are experiencing a larger event, an employee will come into the office and begin the task of dispatching outage tickets to the crews. As we assess the event, additional people may be called in to monitor the various software platforms and helping to coordinate restoration.

A relic in today's mobile technology, this is where the two-way radio becomes a cornerstone in our communications strategy. Yes, we could call cell phones, send text messages, click off emails, but those aren't as efficient as the good old voice on the radio. Radio traffic is monitored, listening for certain clues about the progress being made, what each truck is doing, and of course, communicating about safety.

In closing, I hope to leave you with a couple of takeaways. We take great pride in our electric reliability. In 2020, our average outage lasted 1.45 hours. The clock starts ticking the moment we receive your call. We still rely on a phone call to take action, and the more calls we receive, the better our software can perform. Caller ID is used to recognize your account, so please check with the office to update your contact information, especially if you no longer have a landline.

And always, stay away from downed power lines. Only a trained lineman with the proper tools can determine if a power line is truly dead!

## REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - February and March 2021

### February

- » Reviewed the Financial Report for January 2021. All entries for 2020 are in, and the auditors are working to complete their audit. Sales revenue was below budget for January 2021, with kWh sales 10.5% under, but the margin was over budget due to expenses being behind budget
- » CEO Haman presented the annual cogeneration report, discussed extreme cold weather effects in February, and discussed a proposed UofM Morris project.
- » Selected Director Hjelle to serve as REA's representative on the Great River Energy Board of Directors.
- » Selected Director Anderson to serve as REA's representative on the STAR Energy Services Board of Governors.

### March

- » Reviewed the Financial Report for February 2021 February kWh sales were above budget after being down in January. Delayed expenses give a margin double that budgeted for the first two months. Expenses will catch up in the coming months.
- » Great River Energy representatives provided an overview of efforts to promote beneficial electrification through electric vehicles.
- » Approved resolution for proposed bylaw amendment: Board Granted Authority for Virtual Annual Meetings and Member Attendance at the Annual Meeting by Remote Communication. A vote will be taken as part of the 2021 Annual Meeting.
- » **The regular May Board Meeting will be May 25, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.**

# Attend Your District Meetings in June!

District Meetings offer REA members an opportunity to nominate one or more candidates for the office of director, learn more about their electric cooperative, talk with their elected representatives, and visit with neighbors. In addition, all members in attendance will have their name entered in a drawing to win door prizes.

Nomination by Petition – members of District 2 and District 5 can also be nominated by obtaining the signature of 15 members within their respective district not later than fifteen days after the District Meeting. The petition(s) will be posted at the REA office with the list of nominations made at the District Meetings.

**Please RSVP** by calling REA at 800-473-1722 or email [rea@runestoneelectric.com](mailto:rea@runestoneelectric.com).

## What is required to be an REA Board Member?

### Director Qualifications from REA Bylaws Article III, Section 7

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director who:

- (a) is not a bona fide member of the Cooperative receiving electric service from the Cooperative in the district that the director represents or would represent if elected;
- (b) is not a bona fide resident of the district from which he or she is elected or for which he or she is a candidate; (bona fide resident shall be defined as occupying and continuously and materially purchasing electric service at a location within any director district from which the director is elected or for which he or she is a candidate for at least nine (9) months each calendar year);
- (c) is in any way employed by or substantially financially interested in an enterprise substantially competing with the Cooperative or any Cooperative-affiliated business;
- (d) within five (5) years preceding a director candidate's nomination was or during service on the Board of Directors is adjudged to be guilty of a felony;
- (e) within five (5) years preceding a director candidate's nomination was a full-time employee of the Cooperative;
- (f) within five (5) years preceding a director candidate's nomination was an employee of a statewide association of electric cooperatives, an electric generation and transmission cooperative, or any other entity in which an electric cooperative is a member.
- (g) within five (5) years preceding a director candidate's nomination or during his or her term if elected was or becomes employed by a labor union which represents, has represented, or has endeavored to represent any employee of the cooperative;
- (h) is a close relative of an incumbent who is not up for reelection at that time;
- (i) is a close relative of an employee of the Cooperative;
- (j) is or becomes the full-time employee or agent or, who is or becomes the full-time employer or principal of, another director;
- (k) does not have the capacity to enter legally binding contracts;
- (l) is absent from three or more regular meetings ("Unexcused Absences") of the Board of Directors during any consecutive twelve month period, unless excused for good cause (an "Excused Absence") by the Board.

To learn more about being an REA Board of Director, please visit [www.runestoneelectric.com/about-rea/board-of-directors](http://www.runestoneelectric.com/about-rea/board-of-directors)

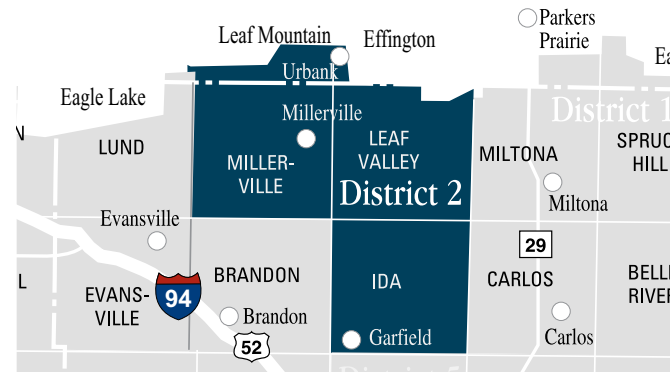


## DISTRICT 2 MEETING

Join us at:

*gathered oaks*

4550 Co Rd 34 NW  
Alexandria, MN 56308



### District 2 Townships:

Millerville, Leaf Valley, and Ida

Monday,  
June 14, 2021

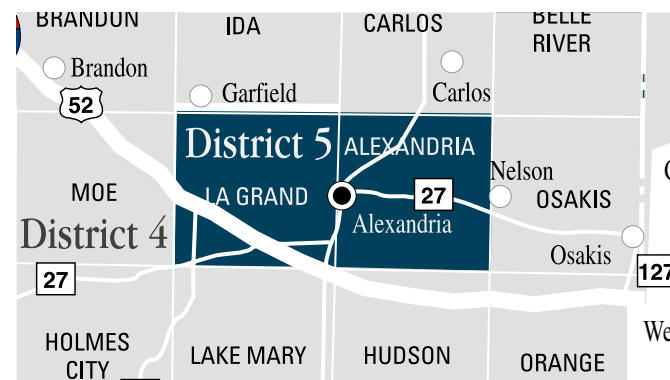
6:30 p.m.

## DISTRICT 5 MEETING

Join us at:



1951 Englund Rd SW  
Alexandria, MN 56308



### District 5 Townships:

LaGrand and Alexandria

Thursday,  
June 17, 2021

6:30 p.m.

## Plan ahead for upgrades or new services

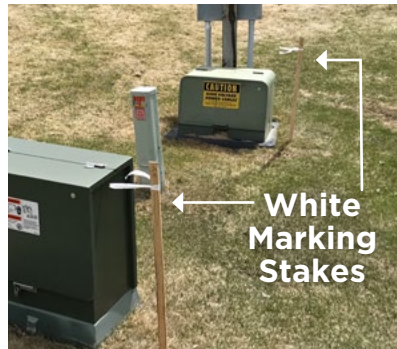
Please plan ahead for electrical upgrades or new services. Delivery time for transformers can be lengthy. In addition, the construction schedule can be tight later in the summer. Please call the REA Operations Department at 800-473-1722.

# What are those markers?

With construction season upon us, you may see flags or other markers within the road right of ways or perhaps even in your yard. Here's why:

When notified by Gopher State One Call, REA will mark our underground wire with red flags and red spray paint. Other utilities will mark their equipment with different colors (see chart below). It is required by law to call Gopher State One Call before you dig. If you see red markers, it doesn't always mean REA is conducting the work, it could be anyone who requested the locate, such as another utility, an excavator, or even you.

If the markers are white and not red, they are representing proposed excavation. White markers can be used by anyone preparing for an excavation project. REA uses stakes with white ribbon, like pictured to the right. If you see these, they typically represent where we will be plowing in new underground or replacing old underground.



| Color Coding For Marking Underground Utilities |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>White</b>                                   | Area of proposed excavation |
| <b>Pink</b>                                    | Temporary Survey Markings   |
| <b>Red</b>                                     | Electric                    |
| <b>Yellow</b>                                  | Gas, Oil, Steam, Propane    |
| <b>Orange</b>                                  | Communication, CATV, Fiber  |
| <b>Blue</b>                                    | Water                       |
| <b>Purple</b>                                  | Reclaimed Water, Irrigation |
| <b>Green</b>                                   | Sewer                       |

## Quick Note about locating:

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 at [gopherstateonecall.org](http://gopherstateonecall.org).

## 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:**  
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, 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

**Sign up to get text messages from REA on control days!**  
Simply text #loadcontrol to 22300.  
*Msg and data rates apply.*

Source: call811.com

## 5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Always call 8-1-1 first, because you never know what's below. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:

### 1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before you start.



### 2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility-owned lines.



### 3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



### 4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for the duration of your project.



### 5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project.

