

LOOK UP AND LIVE!

Be aware of your surroundings this harvest season. This little reminder could save you time, money, and even **your life!**

REA wishes area farmers a safe and successful Harvest!

September 2021

NEWSLINE

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REA Members Gather for the 84th Annual Meeting

Runestone Electric Association celebrated the 84th Annual Meeting of the Cooperative at the Alexandria Area High School on Thursday, August 19. The 2020 Annual Meeting had been canceled due to Covid restrictions. This year's meeting was delayed until August to allow for an in-person gathering.

"Thank you to everyone who took time on a beautiful summer evening to spend an hour learning about current activities at Runestone Electric Association," said REA CEO Al Haman. "I especially appreciated the opportunity to answer questions and receive feedback."

During the business meeting, Board President Barbara Johnson and CEO Al Haman gave reports on the activities and financial condition of the Cooperative. The Cooperative reported assets of over \$95 million with 14,700 accounts at the end of 2020. "I want to assure you that the cooperative is on solid financial footing, and we look forward to serving our members in the best way possible so that when you flip that switch, the lights always come on," said President Johnson.

REA's Bylaws allow for uncontested director elections to be elected by acclamation. Since the 2020 Annual Meeting could not be held, director elections from 2020 and 2021 were elected during the meeting. For the 2020 election, Audrey Hjelle was re-elected in District 3, and Clif Patrick was re-elected in District 6. For this year's election, Barbara Johnson was re-elected in District 2, and Mike Loken was re-elected in District 5.

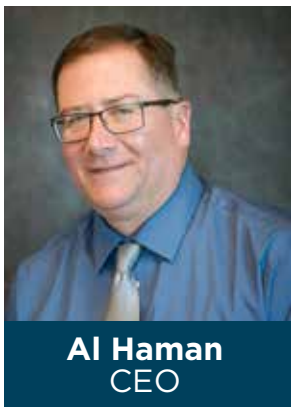
In addition to the board of directors' election, REA members approved proposed changes to the bylaws to allow for virtual annual meetings if needed in the future.

Immediately following the adjournment of the annual meeting, the board of directors held a re-organizational meeting to elect officers for the coming year. Re-elected to their positions were Barbara Johnson from District 2, President; Audrey Hjelle from District 3, Vice President; Gary (Andy) Anderson from District 1, Secretary; and Mike Loken from District 4, Treasurer. Other directors on the board include Clif Patrick, Matthew Mattson, and David Staples.



REA Board of Directors. Pictured above from left to right front row: Mike Loken, Alexandria (District 5); Audrey Hjelle, Barrett (District 3); Barbara Johnson, Milona (District 2); Clif Patrick, Alexandria (District 6); and Matthew Mattson, Kensington (District 7). Back row left to right: Gary (Andy) Anderson, Parkers Prairie (District 1) and David Staples, Kensington (District 4).





Al Haman
CEO

A Note from your CEO

Moving Beyond 2021 and Looking Ahead

Thank you to everyone that attended our Annual Meeting on August 19. During the meeting, we recapped 2020, discussed current happenings at the cooperative, and touched on new and unique challenges we face. Specifically, as the national generation portfolio moves from coal-fired plants to

renewable wind and solar, we must anticipate and find opportunities to pass savings along to you.

The change in wholesale power supply will have an impact on cost. Wind and solar are a low-cost supply for the vast majority of the hours in a year, but we can't always count on the wind and sun to be available when we need them.

Runestone's power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), has a strategy to back up wind with natural gas peaking plants and market purchases to ensure a reliable electricity supply, but electricity from peaking plants is typically higher cost than coal.

This new combination of generation sources is different from a coal plant which runs around the clock creating electricity at a consistent price. That difference can be seen in the wholesale price of power.

So, a changing wholesale cost structure is one item we are watching, looking to take advantage of opportunities to hold electricity prices stable and hopefully lower them. Power supply forecasts predict that lower cost wind and solar for most hours of the year combined with a higher cost for natural gas during a few hours of the year will average out at or below today's cost of coal. Projections I've seen show that coal will continue to increase in cost, while it remains at risk of environmental regulation.

Another development we are closely watching is electric vehicles. Will they become popular in a rural setting? Up to now, adoption has not been widespread. But with the coming of Ford's F-150 Lightning pickup, more available options for passenger vehicles, government mandates to electrify the transportation sector, and stated goals for emissions reduction, we must be prepared to accommodate this new demand for electricity. There must be a reduced rate for those who can charge when the demand for electricity is low.

Runestone has a long history of promoting conservation through energy efficiency rebates and other helpful

programs. Recent legislation signed by Governor Walz will allow us to develop new programs that promote conservation and enable us to pass savings along to you, hopefully by the beginning of 2023.

Another subject covered at the Annual Meeting was Cybersecurity. Cybersecurity has been prominent in the news over the last few months. Be assured everyone in the industry - from generation to distribution, has this as a top priority. At REA, we train employees about cyber-attacks, internally review our systems, and take prudent steps to secure electronic and physical assets under our control. We cannot accept disruption to the supply of electricity.

This is the shortlist of challenges, which require strategic thinking and planning.

What must we do? The biggest and maybe most difficult action item is to examine the structure of our electricity rates. The residential rate structure has remained unchanged for decades - a basic monthly fixed charge coupled with the per-unit charge for each kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity used.

It's my opinion that operating exclusively under that structure doesn't align well with challenges ahead, nor is it responsible planning on my part. I believe we can do better for you.

We see a change in power supply to wind and solar. Increased adoption of electric vehicles is predicted by industry experts. We anticipate a growing number of members will want to be more active participants in how they use electricity. More data is becoming available for us to share with them.

Some members are adding backyard wind and rooftop solar, soon to be coupled with batteries. Maybe there will be an opportunity in the not too distant future to sell excess power in a wholesale market at peak times.

Full home automation is coming, which will allow even more conservation and load management programs for those who wish to participate.

All of these things and more are difficult to make available to you under the existing rate structure, which is why it needs to be examined. There is significant change on the horizon which creates opportunity. With your support, I am optimistic we will position ourselves in the best situation possible while continuing to serve you with safe, reliable, and affordable electricity.

REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - July 2021

- » Reviewed the Financial Report for June 2021. Sales were very strong for the month of June at 14% over last year and 24% over budget. We have added 196 new accounts in the past year. Our REA operating margin is ahead of budget year-to-date primarily due to the timing of expenses including right-of-way clearing, and other expenses.
- » Discussed the impact of weekend load control and seasonal use during the summer.
- » CEO Haman provided information on a recent electricity theft, and informed the Board of COVID-related lead times for critical inventory items such as transformers, poles and cable.
- » Director Hjelle gave the Great River Energy Report highlighting details of recent strategic planning.
- » Voted in favor of the sale of Coal Creek Station and related assets to Rainbow Energy Center, sale of Great River Energy's HVDC system and related assets to Nexus Line, and approved a power purchase agreement with Rainbow Energy Center.
- » **The regular September Board Meeting will be September 28, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.**

Cooperatives Work With Their Members

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

What is the Cold Weather Rule?

The Cold Weather Rule protects some members from having their electricity shut-off due to non-payment between October 1 and April 30.

Can my heat be shut off in the winter?

Yes. The Cold Weather Rule 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 household income)
- » You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills from REA.
- » You have a payment arrangement with REA for which you make reasonably timely payments.

Will you disconnect me without my knowledge?

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.

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. To the right is a list of providers that can help with your energy bills. It is up to you to contact them for help.

What must I do to receive shut-off protection?

If you are behind in your electricity payments, your first step is to call or email Runestone Electric Association. Please call (800) 473-1722 or email rea@runestoneelectric.com.

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

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

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: 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 permanent duty station, utility disconnection is restricted. Minnesota law protects these military households from shut-off if they cannot pay their utility bills in full. If the member and Runestone Electric cannot agree on a payment plan, members have the right to appeal to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Runestone Electric will not disconnect electric service during the appeal process.

Energy Assistance Program

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at or below 60% of the state median income (\$65,964 for a family of four) to qualify for benefits.

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- » Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>
- » Contact your county EAP service provider (See list below)



Energy Assistance Providers

Douglas, Grant, Pope and Stevens Counties:
West Central Minnesota Communities Action, Inc.
(218) 685-4486
1-800-492-4805

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

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

Unclaimed Capital Credit Checks

Names are listed alphabetical by LAST name. If you know the current address to anyone listed below please call 800-473-1722 or email rea@runestoneelectric.com. A complete list is also available at www.RunestoneElectric.com.

NICHOLS, PATRICK C LA VISTA, NE
NOLAN, SUSAN R INDIANAPOLIS, IN
NORBERG, JAMES H COTTONWOOD, AZ
NORDIC TRAILS GOLF ROCKFORD, MN
NORSTEBON, SHARON FERGUS FALLS, MN
O'CONNOR, S ALDRICH, MN
OBBERG, BARBARA HERMAN, MN
OELFKE, DOUGLAS H OSAKIS, MN
OHLSEN, FERDINAND A YUMA, AZ
OLSHACK, WILLARD R PHOENIX, AZ
OLSON, DON L ELBOW LAKE, MN
OLSON, DONOVAN N WENDELL, MN
OLSON, KIRT W WATERTOWN, MN
OLSON, MICHAEL W ALEXANDRIA, MN
ONKEN, ALAN W ALEXANDRIA, MN
OPSAI, DONALD A ALEXANDRIA, MN
OST, CHARLES EDEN PRAIRIE, MN
PACZOSA, BARBARA J MAPLEWOOD, MN
PARSONS, GREG W ALEXANDRIA, MN
PAULSON, GENE A HOPKINS, MN
PEACHEY, ELMER S GENTRY, AR
PEDERSEN, BJORN FLAGSTAFF, AZ
PEDERSON, ROLLO C MINNEAPOLIS, MN
PETERSEN, JAMES R MINNEAPOLIS, MN
PETERSON, JIM ALEXANDRIA, MN
PIERCE, JIM A SAINT CLOUD, MN
PIERE, JULIE ALEXANDRIA, MN
POMME NURSERY WENDELL, MN
PRCHAL, MYRTLE ALEXANDRIA, MN
PRIEBE, LU VONNE NEW RICHLAND, MN
PROELL, THOMAS B NELSON, MN
PURDY, CHARLES A ALEXANDRIA, MN
QUAST, ED E MISSION, TX
RASMUSSEN, DONALD E ALEXANDRIA, MN
REDBURN, ALBERT F BROOKLYN CENTER, MN
REINARZ, JEFFREY D DULUTH, MN
REINBOLD, PAUL AVON, MN
RIPKA, ROMAN STANLEY, WI
RONDEAU, PAUL E VIRGINIA BEACH, VA
RONNING, ARNOLD PARKERS PRAIRIE, MN
ROOK, JOLENE ALEXANDRIA, MN
ROOS, FLORENCE L STARBUCK, MN
RORVIG, MARLEN HANCOCK, MN
ROSZKOWSKI, RICHARD J GLADSTONE, ND
ROTH, DAVID A MILTONA, MN
RUTTEN, GREG R LITTLE FALLS, MN
RYMANOWSKI, DANIEL J MINNEAPOLIS, MN
SALTO, NORMAN ALEXANDRIA, MN
SAYRE, LISA ASHBY, MN
SCHAKE, TERRY L ALEXANDRIA, MN
SCHLAPKOHL, DONALD W ALEXANDRIA, MN
SCHLEUTER, SHERRIE GARDEN CITY, MN
SCHMIDT, DELORES JACKSONVILLE, FL
SCHMIDT, STEVEN L ALEXANDRIA, MN
SCHOENROCK, M JAMES ALEXANDRIA, MN
SCHULTZ, DARIN A ALEXANDRIA, MN
SCHULTZ, JOHN F MILTONA, MN
SERBUS, ROLAND T WILLMAR, MN
SERENIUS, BLANCHE CHARLOTTE, NC
SHANNON, GLENN W WILLMAR, MN
SHEPPARD, THEODORE MJR ASHBY, MN
SHOGREN, SHIRLEY LAS VEGAS, NV
SHRIVER, HENRY RUTHTON, MN
SJOMAN, STAN ALEXANDRIA, MN
SLETTA, JUDITH ALEXANDRIA, MN
SMITH, DARIN A EVANSVILLE, MN

SMITH, JEFFREY C GLENWOOD, MN
SMITH, RICK J SAINT PAUL, MN
SNELSON, DELOS L PRESCOTT VALLEY, AZ
SODER, CHRISTOPHER A NORTHOME, MN
SOLVIE, MARION CYRUS, MN
SPARTZ, LARRY A ALEXANDRIA, MN
SPEED, TIMOTHY E ALEXANDRIA, MN
STAMNESS, GERALD D BARRETT, MN
STATTELMAN, SCOTT W MARSHALL, MN
STEARNS, ROSELLA J ALEXANDRIA, MN
STEINE, ALAN T MINNEAPOLIS, MN
STEINKOPF, RICHARD C MINNEAPOLIS, MN
STENNES, STEPHEN L EAGAN, MN
STERNHAGEN, TAMMY ALEXANDRIA, MN
STIER, GLENDA HOFFMAN, MN
STIERLEN, RICHARD ALEXANDRIA, MN
STOTESBERY, GARY L ALEXANDRIA, MN
STRAZZABOSCO, EVA M ALEXANDRIA, MN
STROM, MAURICE M DILWORTH, MN
STRUBLE, RODNEY D JACOBSON, MN
STUMPF, WAYNE A ALEXANDRIA, MN
SUNDET, ERNIE L REDWOOD FALLS, MN
SZENAY, NICHOLAS A GLENWOOD, MN
TAVEIRNE, STEVEN M CHASKA, MN
TEPLEY, DONALD F BROWERVILLE, MN
THOENNES, LAWRENCE N BRANDON, MN
THOM, E M SIOUX FALLS, SD
THOMPSON, HARLO N ALEXANDRIA, MN
THOMPSON, JEANNE L ALEXANDRIA, MN
THRONSON, MARK F EVANSVILLE, MN
THURSTON, DEBRA M ALEXANDRIA, MN
TIMM, MYRLEN R SARTELL, MN
TIP RESORT STURGEON BAY, WI
TOLIFSON, DUANE O KENSINGTON, MN
TOLLEFSON, M RENVILLE, MN
TOWNER, JEFF C GARFIELD, MN
TRENT, JUNE V BELLEVUE, NE
TROY, MICHAEL J BEACON, NY
TSCHAMPLE, EDITH E LONG PRAIRIE, MN
TVRDIK, KEITH J SAINT PAUL, MN
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OSAKIS, MN
URBAN, CAROL A BURNSVILLE, MN
VAN KEMPEN, STEVE ALEXANDRIA, MN
VIKESLAND, TESA J WENDELL, MN
VINKEMEIER, EDWARD E ANNANDALE, MN
WADD, WILLIAM A ALEXANDRIA, MN
WALKER, DEANNA ALEXANDRIA, MN
WALLIN, JUDITH M ALEXANDRIA, MN
WALLNER, GERALD M RAMSEY, MN
WELKER, RAY W OTTERTAIL, MN
WICHERS, DONALD L GLENWOOD, MN
WILKEN, WM B ANDOVER, MN
WILLIAMS, ALVIN D STARBUCK, MN
WILLIS, NANCY J LOWRY, MN
WILLS, GLENN R SAUK CENTRE, MN
WILSON, RICHARD L EDEN PRAIRIE, MN
WINSLOW, CARROLL S DALTON, MN
WOELFEL, VERNON J BIRD ISLAND, MN
WOLF, LLOYD K WAITE PARK, MN
WOODY, MARTHA ALEXANDRIA, MN
WURSCHE, TERRI J MINNEAPOLIS, MN
YOH, DALE W BURNSVILLE, MN
YOUNG, BRIAN MILTONA, MN
YOUNG, BRIAN D MILTONA, MN
ZANDER, GREG ALEXANDRIA, MN
ZINS, DALE J ALEXANDRIA, MN



NEWSLINE

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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.

Know what's below,
Call before you dig!



Call 811 or visit
gopherstateonecall.org
before you dig