

LOOK UP AND LIVE!

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

NEWSLINE

REA wishes area farmers a safe and successful Harvest!

September 2022

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PROPANE **VS** ELECTRIC HEAT

✓ THE BEST VALUE FOR YOUR HOME ✓

BETTER OPTION

↑↑↑
When
Propane is
\$1.44/gal.
and higher

✓
**REA's Dual
Fuel Rate**

BEST OPTION!

↑↑↑
When
Propane is
72¢/gal.
and higher

✓
**Air Source
Heat Pump**
on REA's Dual Fuel Rate



An Air-Source Heat Pump works as a more efficient central air conditioner during the warmer months and provides heating in all other seasons.

Combine REA Rebates with heat pump efficiencies to start saving today!

For more information on heat pump technologies and rebates available, please contact the energy experts at REA - (800) 473-1722, email rea@runestoneelectric.com or visit www.runestoneelectric.com.

Considering Installing Solar Panels?

We have heard of solar vendors visiting members' homes to discuss solar installation. Some vendors claim to work in partnership with Runestone Electric to install solar panels on private property. As a practice, we do not endorse or partner with any specific solar vendor on solar installations for our members. We work with many different vendors based on the member's choice of vendor. Members should talk to others with a similar system and get references on vendors before making a final purchase.

Call REA before you begin the process of installing solar panels at your home or business. We are ready to discuss your average usage, how your monthly electric bill may differ with a solar installation, and operating/maintenance cost considerations. Visit www.RunestoneElectric.com for information on renewable energy.

1994 Felling Trailer For Sale



Bids are being accepted to sell a 18' long, 12,000 lbs capacity, pintle hitch 1994 Felling Trailer. The trailer may be viewed at REA's Operation Center from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Monday - Friday until November 1, 2022. The equipment will be sold "as is" and "with all faults." REA's Purchase Agreement form will need to be signed by the buyer prior to closing. Cash payment required, no checks please. REA reserves the right to accept or reject any and all offers.

Deadline for submitting a bid is November 1, 2022.

Include your name, phone number, and bid in a sealed envelope and submit to:

REA Trailer Bid
6839 Power Lane SW
Alexandria, MN 56308



Al Haman
CEO

A Note from your CEO

REA electric rates to change October 1st

After months of discussing the need to align the monthly fixed charge more closely with the cost of serving each REA account, the Board has voted to proceed with the change as of October 1st. The bill you receive in November will reflect a \$51 monthly fixed charge for general service accounts and \$.0969 per kWh energy charge. Please see the chart below and charts on page 3 for a summary of changes to various rate classes.

We started looking at the gap between the basic cost of service (\$51 per account per month) and the monthly fixed charge (\$29.25) back in April of 2021. In October, REA's senior management and REA's Board of Directors participated in a strategic planning session where we specifically focused on our cost of service, wholesale power supply, and rate structure. Coming out of that session, we agreed to explore aligning the minimum cost of service with the monthly fixed charge in an intentional, planned way.

We have been talking about the fixed charge for many months. Members have had the opportunity to express their concerns at the District Meetings, the Annual Meeting and the Member Advisory Council. I have asked for and received member input and shared all the comments with the Board.

One common theme expressed by members has been fairness. With fairness in mind, let me explain one of our most compelling reasons for needing to increase the fixed charge. Currently, our monthly fixed

charge is \$29.25 per general service account, which covers a portion of the basic cost of service (\$51). The remaining \$21.75 is built into the cost per kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity and collected through sales volume. By increasing the fixed charge to \$51, we fairly distribute the basic cost of service across the membership rather than relying on energy sales.

Of our 15,000 accounts in the residential/seasonal rate class, nearly 2,000 accounts use less than 100 kWhs per month. For comparison, an average home on REA's system uses around 1,000 kWhs per month.

Regardless of how much electricity is actually used, there is a minimum cost of service to have electricity available when a member wants it. We know that the cost is currently \$51 per month. Government policymakers are pushing utilities, like REA, to sell less electricity - whether through energy conservation or by incentivizing backyard generators (solar panels, wind turbines, etc.). The recently passed Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 is but one example of this effort at the Federal level. Having a rate structure where REA's basic cost of doing business is largely tied to the volume of sales isn't sustainable anymore. We need to become less dependent upon the volume of sales, which can open us up to better meet member needs in the future.

I am convinced this historic decision will serve our members well in the future. It moves us into a fair rate environment, secures additional financial stability for the cooperative, and prepares us to deal with a regulatory environment which is beyond our control.

FIXED CHARGE TO CHANGE OCTOBER 1, 2022

<i>Residential, Seasonal, Small Commercial</i> General Single Phase	Current Rate	New Rate October 1, 2022
Fixed Charge	\$29.25 per month	\$51.00 per month
Energy Charge	\$0.1255 per kWh (June - August) \$0.1118 per kWh (other months)	\$0.0969 per kWh (Year Round)

REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - July 2022

- » Reviewed the Financial Report for June 2022. The kW demand in the month was 14% higher than budgeted and higher than it's been historically for the month of June. This resulted in higher power cost and lower gross margin for the month. The year-to-date margin is under budget due to costs related to storms.
- » Learned of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations to be installed at Lake Brophy Park, Kensington Runestone Park and Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management, and EV charging corridors identified for Alexandria's two exits.
- » STAR Energy Services Director of Operations Kristi Robinson, P.E. presented REA's class cost of service study. Ms. Robinson provided a variety of rate scenarios to achieve an estimated \$1.19 million operating margin in 2023.
- » Director Hjelle reported on the July GRE Board meeting, highlighting the proposed MISO transmission build-out plan.
- » **The regular September Board Meeting will be Tuesday, September 27, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.**

Rate Changes as of **October 1, 2022**

<i>Commercial & Agricultural</i> General Three Phase	Current Rate	New Rate October 1, 2022
Fixed Charge	\$45.00 per month	\$68.00 per month
Energy Charge	\$0.1235 per kWh: (June - August) \$0.1097 per kWh (other months)	\$0.0969 per kWh (Year Round)

<i>Commercial</i> Large Power Single Phase	Current Rate	New Rate October 1, 2022
Fixed Charge	\$39.00 per month	\$54.00 per month
Energy Charge	\$0.0790 per kWh (Year Round)	\$0.0770 per kWh (Year Round)
Demand Charge	\$10.00 (June-August) \$6.50 (Other Months)	\$10.00 (June-August) \$6.50 (Other Months)

<i>Commercial</i> Large Power Three Phase	Current Rate	New Rate October 1, 2022
Fixed Charge	\$60.00 per month	\$72 per month
Energy Charge	\$0.0790 per kWh (Year Round)	\$0.0770 per kWh (Year Round)
Demand Charge	\$10.00 (June-August) \$6.50 (Other Months)	\$10.00 (June-August) \$6.50 (Other Months)

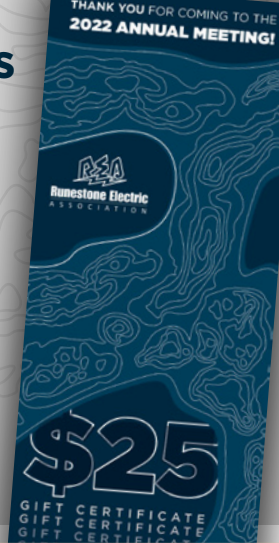
<i>Controlled</i> Irrigation Rate	Current Rate	New Rate October 1, 2022
Fixed Charge (June - September)	\$352.00 per year	\$612.00 per year
Energy Charge	\$0.0907 per kWh	\$0.0833 per kWh
Demand Charge	\$6.00 (All Demand)	\$6.00 (All Demand)

<i>Non-Controlled</i> Irrigation Rate	Current Rate	New Rate October 1, 2022
Fixed Charge (June - September)	\$352.00 per year	\$612.00 per year
Energy Charge	\$0.0907 per kWh	\$0.0833 per kWh
Demand Charge	\$20.00 (All Demand)	\$20.00 (All Demand)

Rate changes will appear on the bill you receive in November.
Interruptible Service and Peak Alert Service Rates available by contacting REA.
Please visit www.runestoneelectric.com for information on other rate classes.

Cooperatives Support Local Business!

If you attended the REA Annual Meeting in April and received a gift certificate, please remember to redeem your certificate at one of the participating REA businesses listed below **before 12/31/22**.



Redeemable only at Participating REA Member Businesses:

22 Northmen Brewing
320-846-5443

Beau Coffee Company
320-239-2078

Brother's Market - Carlos
320-852-7331

Brother's Market - Miltona
218-943-3333

Burr Vineyards
651-726-4397

Carlos Creek Winery
320-846-5443

Chet's Lakeside Inn
218-943-2471

Country Blossom Farm
320-334-1620

Diamond Waves & Wags Car Wash
320-759-8040

Doralsamy Farm
320-524-2513

Erickson's Petting Zoo
320-762-0184

Jim & Judy's
320-852-7604

Kadejan Market
320-460-8710

Lake Café at Arrowwood Resort
320-762-1124

Lake Miltona Golf Club
218-852-7078

Lake Reno Bar & Grill
320-283-5030

L'Etoile du Nord Vineyard
320-298-4686

Long Lake Lodge
320-524-2755

Rolling Forks Vineyards
320-634-7655

Selective TV
320-763-5924

Stivland Gardens
320-283-5227

Stoke Wood-Fired Pizza
320-846-5443

Tipsinah Mounds Golf Course
219-685-4271

Let us answer your questions about cold weather shut-off protection

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 mailing 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.

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.

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.

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

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 renters and homeowners pay for energy bills and heating system repairs. Household income must be at or below 50% of the state median income of \$67,765 (2021-2022) 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)

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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.

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District 5: Mike Loken, Secretary

District 6: Clif Patrick, Director

District 7: Matthew Mattson, Director

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Al Haman, CEO

Sue Lundeen, Editor

Ally Koudela, 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 will use reasonable diligence to furnish adequate and dependable electric service, but it cannot and does not guaranty continuous and uninterrupted service.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer

Sign up to get text messages from REA on control days!

Simply text #loadcontrol to 22300.
Msg and data rates apply.



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