

# Celebrating Co-op Month at the REA Office!

October is Co-op Month! In celebration, we will be serving up cookies from Country Blossom Farm and Apple Cider all October long.

# NEWSLINE

October 2022

In this Issue: **New Rates October 1st** pg 3 • **Operation Round Up** pg 4



## Dual Fuel Participants Tips & Reminders:

### Is your Dual Fuel System ready for winter?

If you have a dual fuel heating system, also known as an off-peak system, now is the time to be sure your off-peak controls are functioning and your back-up system is prepared. Your fuel supply should be checked and chimneys cleaned.

Summer storms can damage equipment controls within off-peak heating systems. It is the member's responsibility to contact an electrical contractor should the system not be functioning correctly.

If you have electric heat, but are not sure if you are on the dual fuel program, please call REA at (800) 473-1722.

During the heating season, the electric heat portion of your dual fuel system may be controlled up to a maximum of 400 hours, however this is rare.

- » Control will not will not exceed 12 hours per control event.
- » If you're on dual fuel, check the electric and non-electric (dual) parts of your heating equipment now.
- » Fill your fuel tank full in case it needs to run for hours at a time.
- » We anticipate more control in the morning.
- » Check on the likelihood of control by visiting [www.RunestoneElectric.com](http://www.RunestoneElectric.com) and select "Today's Load Control"
- » **Sign up to get text messages on control days - text #loadcontrol to 22300.**

### Air Source Heat Pumps Your Year Round Choice

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

**BONUS WINTER BENEFIT:** Electric ASHP heating is much more efficient and cost effective than fuel heat technology, delivering up to three times more energy than the electricity it uses

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



### Plans to escape the cold this winter?

Stop and read *BEFORE* turning off your water heater at your electrical panel

Turning off your water heater when leaving on extended trips can be a good idea as long as you follow these tips:

#### 1. Check your breakers

Don't turn off the breaker if you have a yellow sticker (pictured) or if your electrical panel lists your water heater circuit powering your off-peak meter and controller. If the breaker is turned off, you will miss out on the value of off-peak rates while you're away.

#### 2. Disconnect Switch

Have your electrician install a disconnect switch. Installed next to the water heater, a disconnect switch lets you shut off your water heater while maintaining power to the off-peak meter and controller.

**Still have questions?** Feel free to contact REA.





**Al Haman**  
CEO

# A Note from your CEO

## Prepare for more load control this winter

REA's Energy Management programs have grown significantly over the past 40+ years. Over half of REA's 15,000 members participate in at least one of these programs with personal and cooperative benefits. The ability to control

water heaters, air conditioners, electric space heating, and commercial accounts has allowed us to deliver low rates to our members and cost stability for the cooperative.

With global energy prices, especially natural gas prices, expected to be higher over the upcoming heating season, REA's Energy Management programs will be needed to help minimize impacts on our energy rates. In recent years we have used these programs, specifically the Dual Fuel program, to interrupt electric heating sources at times when the price of electricity is high. We call this load control. In the past we have seen about 100 hours of control in a heating season. We anticipate that to increase to about 200 hours this year with additional control events anticipated in the morning.

We want our members on the Dual Fuel program to be aware of these changes before the heating season begins to ensure they have adequate backup fuel (propane, wood, fuel oil, etc.) for the anticipated increase in control hours.

REA is thankful for members who participate in these money-saving programs. REA's Dual Fuel rate provides excellent value and is still your best option when propane is \$1.44 or higher.

Energy Management programs continue to provide value to our members and we expect them to grow and adapt as our energy markets change over time.

### Rate Changes This Month

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 charts on page 3 for a summary of changes to various rate classes.

Over the past year we have studied the gap between the basic cost of service (\$51 per account per month) and the monthly fixed charge (\$29.25 prior to October 1st). The goal has been to align the minimum cost of service with the monthly fixed charge in an intentional, planned way.

A common question we hear is "what is included in the fixed charge?" The fixed charge covers the minimum system needed to light a light bulb at every service. This includes the meter, the transformer, and the wire and poles that connect the service to the nearest substation. The fixed charge accounts for the co-op's investment in equipment like poles, wires, transformers and substations.

### Looking ahead

Due to the transition from fossil fuel power supply sources to more renewables, the wholesale cost of electricity has become indexed to natural gas. Forecasts predict the cost of natural gas this winter will be nearly triple what was paid as recently as 2021. Our wholesale power provider, Great River Energy, has made us aware that they expect price volatility over the winter and we should prepare. We will know more in the upcoming weeks as to how this might impact Runestone members.

I understand inflation and the cost of all forms of energy are piling up on members' finances. We made significant cuts to our operations and maintenance budget hoping things would ease during 2022. We all know that hasn't happened and looks to continue for at least the next 12 months and maybe longer. Our budget decisions for 2023 are challenging, but we need to make the proper system improvements and maintenance to ensure a safe, reliable electric system.

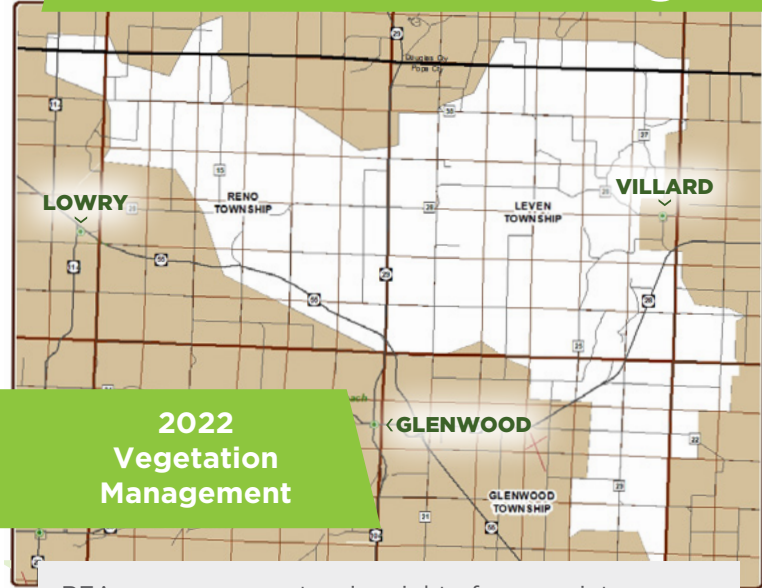
### Financial Assistance

Don't hesitate to get in touch with our office if you are facing financial difficulty. We will work with you to set up mutually agreed upon payment arrangements. It is also essential to seek out the energy assistance provider that serves the county in which you live. We have provided a list of energy assistance providers on the back page of this newsletter. I can't stress enough the importance of seeking help before you fall behind.

## REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - August 2022

- » Reviewed the Financial Report for June 2022. Higher than budget demand for the month resulted in a lower gross margin. An allocation of associated capital credits offset the lower gross margin to bring the total July margin close to budget. Energy sales of kWh's remain ahead of budget and ahead of last year.
- » Voted in favor of the withdrawal of Connexus Energy as a member of Great River Energy, converting the cooperative to a customer.
- » Approved changes to the monthly fixed charge for various rate classes effective October 1, 2022.
- » In his report, CEO Haman discussed proposed Great River Energy rates, the Inflation Reduction Act, the new Lake Mary Substation and the FEMA application process for storm damage in May.
- » **The regular October Board Meeting will be Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.**

# Vegetation Management Leads to Fewer Power Outages



REa manages an extensive right of way maintenance program aimed at reducing outages caused by trees. To ensure reliability and safety, this year we will spend \$500,000 on trimming, tree removal, and mowing and spraying under our distribution lines. Our contractor, Carr's Tree Service, is working in areas served by the Leven Substation (See map above). Carr's Tree Service is accredited by the Tree Care Industry Association and has certified arborists on staff.

<i>Residential, Seasonal, Small Commercial</i> <b>General Single Phase</b>	<b>Current Rate</b>	<b>New Rate October 1, 2022</b>
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)

<i>Commercial &amp; Agricultural</i> <b>General Three Phase</b>	<b>Current Rate</b>	<b>New Rate October 1, 2022</b>
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> <b>Large Power Single Phase</b>	<b>Current Rate</b>	<b>New Rate October 1, 2022</b>
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> <b>Large Power Three Phase</b>	<b>Current Rate</b>	<b>New Rate October 1, 2022</b>
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> <b>Irrigation Rate</b>	<b>Current Rate</b>	<b>New Rate October 1, 2022</b>
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> <b>Irrigation Rate</b>	<b>Current Rate</b>	<b>New Rate October 1, 2022</b>
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)

## Utility Scam Awareness

We want to warn our members to be on guard for scams targeting payment on their electric bill. Here are some things to look for in a potential scam call:

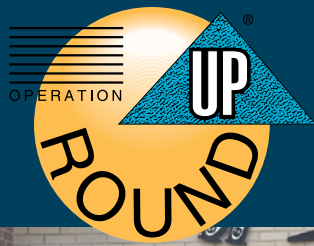
- » Caller will contact you and inform you that your power will be disconnected in a short period of time if you do not make an immediate payment on your account.
- » Caller will ask for payment with a prepaid credit card or gift card.
- » Caller will ask for personal and financial information.

Know that REa will never call and demand quick payment over the phone while threatening disconnection with no prior communication. REa members who are delinquent will receive multiple letters and phone calls prior to disconnection. Contact REa if you receive a questionable call.

## Billing Reminders

- » When paying by check, only use black or blue ink
- » Please refrain from using checks with dark colored pictures or scenes on the checks
- » Please allow sufficient time to mail your payment due to longer delivery times.

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](http://www.runestoneelectric.com) for information on other rate classes.



# REA Members Support Their Communities

Operation Round Up Distributes \$12,800 in September!



## NEWSLINE

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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, Vice President
- District 2: Barbara Johnson, President
- District 3: Audrey Hjelle, Director
- District 4: Dave Staples, Treasurer
- District 5: Mike Loken, Secretary
- District 6: Clif Patrick, Director
- District 7: Matthew Mattson, Director

### Editorial Staff

- 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.*



**Representing some of the organizations receiving Operation Round Up® grants in September,** front row from left to right: Jan Arneson, Pope County Families in Need; Georgia Wahlberg, Alexandria Area Branch of AAUW; Barry Wahlberg, Operation Round Up® Trust Board Member; Marita Johnson, Grant County Humane Society; Kris Chisholm, Douglas County Car Care Program; David Lundy, Operation Round Up® Trust Board Member; Terri Shatek, Hubbard Broadcasting Radioathon to End Child Abuse; Christin Klimek, Lakes Area Humane Society; Lindy Helberg, Aeneas Cemetery Association; Jeff Gaffaney, Operation Round Up® Trust Board Member; and Darrell Klimek, Rose Hill Trinity Cemetery Association.

Through the contributions of Runestone Electric Association's participating members, the Operation Round Up® Trust Board recently approved \$12,800 to assist local community programs during its quarterly meeting

REA's Operation Round Up Trust Board, a voluntary board of seven REA members, reviewed and considered 22 grant applications and distributed funds to 17 projects and programs this past quarter. Community-based projects and programs have received over \$1.1 million since the program's inception in 2003.

### Community

- Lakes Area Humane Society, Inc. (\$500)
- United Communities Advocating Non-Violence (\$1,000)
- Donnelly Community Club, Inc. (\$500)
- Central Lakes Search & Rescue (\$1,000)
- Aeneas Cemetery Association (\$300)
- Douglas County Car Care, Inc (\$2,000)
- Radiothon to Prevent Child Abuse (\$2,000)
- Stevens County FFA3 (Alumni) (\$300)
- Rose Hill Trinity Cemetery (\$300)
- Alexandria Area Branch of AAUW (\$200)
- Pope County Families in Need (\$1,000)
- Ellie's Legacy (\$300)
- Love INC (\$1,000)
- Grant County Humane Society (\$500)
- Lake Amelia Cemetery (\$300)

### Fire Departments & First Responders

- Starbuck Fire Department (\$1,000)

### Youth

- Alexandria Area Young Life (\$600)

The deadline to apply for the next round of Operation Round Up grants is **November 11, 2022.**

Applications can be completed online at **www.RunestoneElectric.com**

## 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

