

# REA Wishes You and Your Family a Very Happy Thanksgiving!

REA will be closed November 24 and 25.

To report a power outage or an emergency, call (800) 473-1722. We have a 24-hour answering service to take your call.

During this time when we have so much for which to be thankful, we want to thank you for your business!

## NEWSLINE

November 2022

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### REA'S CHRISTMAS LIGHT CONTEST

Back in 2022! REA is hosting a Christmas light contest to recognize the members that put hard work into their light displays AND let our communities know where to look for these spectacular lights. Check out the details below.

#### Categories and Prizes:

- Best Large Display (\$100 REA bill credit)
- Best Small Display (\$100 REA bill credit)
- Most Creative Display (\$100 REA bill credit)

#### Registration:

Online registration form at [www.runestoneelectric.com](http://www.runestoneelectric.com) or call REA at 800-473-1722. Submit photo with address so that the public will know where to go if they want to check out the holiday displays.

#### Details:

- Display must be served by Runestone Electric Association (REA)
- Deadline for contest entry is 12/11/22
- Map of participating displays will be available at [www.runestoneelectric.com](http://www.runestoneelectric.com) after 12/11/22
- Judging of the lighting displays will take place between 12/16 - 12/18.
- Winners will be notified on 12/22/22



## 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!**



**Al Haman**  
CEO

# A Note from your CEO

## Rate changes appear on your bill this month

The bill you receive this month reflects a \$51 monthly fixed charge for general service accounts and a \$.0969 per kWh energy charge. Other rate classes will experience changes as well.

We have spent the past year talking about the fixed charge and explaining the gap between the basic cost of service (\$51 per account per month) and the former monthly fixed charge (\$29.25 prior to October 1st). With the new fixed charge of \$51, the cost of service is now accurately reflected.

I have said it in the past, and I continue to believe this historic decision to change the fixed charge will serve our members well in the future.

### Financial assistance

Inflation and the increasing cost of just about everything is stressful for everyone. Members with past-due accounts should contact our office to set up payment arrangements. It is also essential to seek out the energy assistance provider that serves the county where you live. You can find a list of energy assistance providers by visiting the *financial assistance* page on our website ([www.runestoneelectric.com](http://www.runestoneelectric.com)) or simply call our office at 800-473-1722. It is extremely important to seek help before you fall behind.

### More load control anticipated this winter

As I mentioned last month, our wholesale power supplier, Great River Energy, anticipates load control to increase to about 200 hours this year compared to about 100 hours of control in the past. We also expect more control events in the morning.

With 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 price of natural gas this winter will be nearly triple what was paid as recently as 2021.

REA's Energy Management programs can help minimize the impacts of the volatile energy market 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 are thankful for members who participate in the Dual Fuel program, and we want them to be aware of these changes to ensure they have adequate backup fuel (propane, wood, fuel oil, etc.) for the anticipated increase in control hours. Please see the *Dual Fuel Participants Tips & Reminders* on page 3 for more information.



The rush is on! Area farmers are busy finishing harvest chores, and REA's crews are busy with fall construction projects before the ground freezes. The long shadows of the digger derrick truck are a tell-tale sign of the season ahead. Crews recently installed a new underground service southeast of Garfield to service a Great River Energy switch. REA reminds everyone to use caution when working near power poles and other electrical equipment. Always look up to check clearances.

## REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - September 2022

- » Reviewed the Financial Report for August 2022. The August margin was a negative variance from budget due to higher kW demand/power cost in the month. The year-to-date margin has a negative variance from the budget, in large part due to the May storms. Other expense variations are in OCR and substation maintenance, the water heater program, and office building maintenance.
- » Approved an estate capital credit refund, as allowed by REA Policy C12 - Capital Credits.
- » STAR Energy Services Electrical Engineer McKade Kleinknecht, PE, presented the 2023-2026 Construction Work Plan. With an estimated cost of \$22,098,628, the Work Plan represents distribution system improvement projects, aging infrastructure, line conversion from overhead to underground, and load management receivers. The board approved the Work Plan.
- » **The regular November Board Meeting will be Tuesday, November 29, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.**

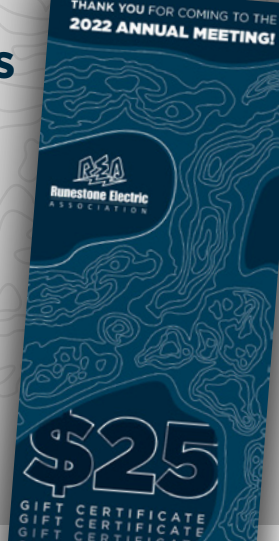
## Dual Fuel Participants **Tips & Reminders:**

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 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.**

## Cooperatives Support Local Business!

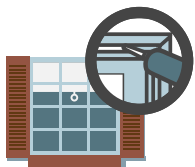
If you attended the REA Annual Meeting in April and received a gift certificate, please remember to redeem your certificate at one of the participating REA businesses listed below **before 12/31/22**.



### 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
- Doraisamy 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

## Easy Ways To Save Electricity



### Weatherize

Seal doors and windows with caulk, weather stripping and/or plastic film.

### Laundry for Less

Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter-weight clothing. You'll spend less time running the dryer for lighter-weight items, which saves energy.



### Cook up savings

Use smaller appliances, like microwaves, toaster ovens and slow cookers when possible.

### Seal in Warmth

Close blinds and curtains during the night to keep cold air out. Open them during the day to let sunlight in.



## Interested in more ways to save?

REA is here as your trusted energy provider to get you the tools you need to use electricity wisely. Give us a call or check out our website for more energy saving advice. **800-473-1722** or visit [www.RunestoneElectric.com](http://www.RunestoneElectric.com)

## Barbara Johnson Completes Coursework

REA Director Barbara Johnson, Miltona, recently completed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Board Leadership Program. Barbara completed required coursework in evolving power supply, effective board meetings, succession planning, rate making, capital credits, risk management, cybersecurity and more. Pictured to the left is Board President Barbara Johnson, and Board Vice President Gary (Andy) Anderson.





## 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.*

## Correcting Neutral-To-Earth Voltage Conditions

As a member of Runestone Electric Association, you should feel free to call us anytime with concerns related to your electric service. One area that can be a concern, particularly for livestock farms, is stray voltage.

Electrical supply systems delivering power to farms, homes and businesses are grounded to the earth to make them as safe as possible and to ensure their reliability. Proper grounding of these electric systems is not only essential, but a requirement of the codes that govern both home and utility practices. Because electric current is designed to be carried by the grounded conductors (neutral conductors), these wires will have a small voltage associated with them. Objects that are bonded to the neutral conductors will therefore have a voltage on them.

A consequence of the electrical system in the United States is "Stray Voltage". Stray voltage is often defined as a small voltage (less than 10 volts) that exists on grounded objects that are within close proximity to livestock. If an animal touches a grounded object, such as a metal drinking cup, while standing on an ungrounded floor or on soil a current can flow through the animal's body. If the voltage level is high enough, the resulting current may be sensed by the cow. Stray voltage can become a cow's behavioral issue with the livestock operator. Hesitation to drink from a waterer, or enter a parlor can be a behavioral symptom of stray voltage.

Although stray voltage is present on all distribution systems, humans usually do not notice it. However, livestock - especially dairy cows - are particularly sensitive. The goal is to keep the voltage level low enough that it will not cause a problem on the farm. Stray voltage can also result from deteriorating and improper wiring, faulty equipment, or improper grounding. Because of high electric use, high humidity, silage acids, and manure, a dairy farm is not the ideal environment for electrical wiring.

REA offers stray voltage investigations at no charge.

The Minnesota Stray Voltage Guide outlines the steps farmers, electricians, utilities and their advisors can take to discover and resolve stray voltage concerns on livestock farms. When farmers and utility companies work together, stray voltage concerns are more likely to be satisfactorily resolved. To download the Guide, visit [www.minnesotastrayvoltageguide.com](http://www.minnesotastrayvoltageguide.com)



This month's safety tip...

Stay Alive, Stay inside.

