

# Why Trim Trees?

Trees are the #1 cause of outages!

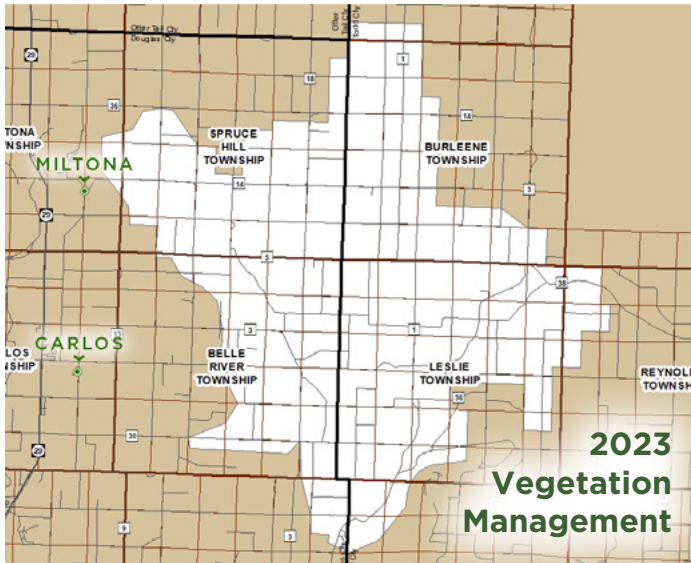


Photo courtesy of Carr's Tree Service

# NEWSLINE

June 2023

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## Vegetation Management Leads to Fewer Power Outages

In the last 10 years, trees have led to 24% of outages, making it the #1 cause of power outages to date! 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 \$750,000 on trimming, tree removal, and mowing and spraying under our distribution lines.

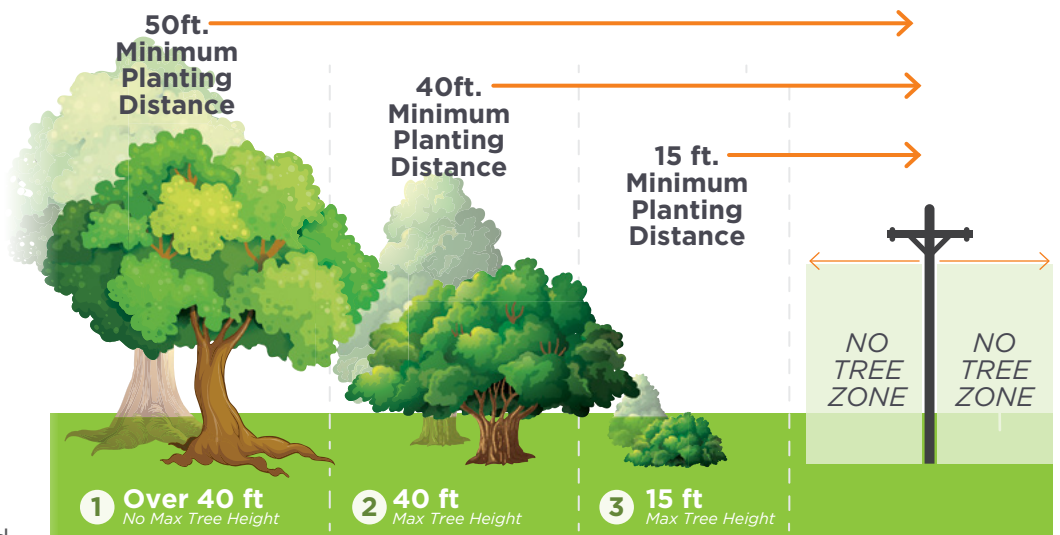
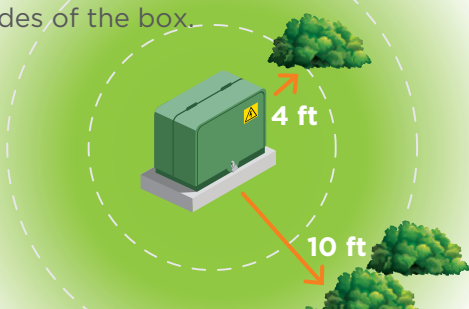
Our contractor, Carr's Tree Service, is working in areas served by the Belle River Substation (see map to the Left) and will be moving through areas east of Miltona and Carlos through the summer. Carr's Tree Service is accredited by the Tree Care Industry Association and has certified arborists on staff.

## Planting Guidelines

Landscaping is a great way to increase the value of your property and save energy, but trees and shrubs planted too close to power lines and other electrical equipment can create both safety and reliability concerns. You can help maintain power line access and clearance by planning ahead before planting trees and shrubs. These guidelines help ensure a safe and reliable service for all Runestone Electric members.

## Pad Mount Transformers

Mature trees, shrubs, and plants need to maintain 10 feet of clearance in front of doors and 4 feet on all other sides of the box.



**Quick Tip!** Please do not landscape or install fences near REA's pad mount transformers, junction boxes or at the base of power poles. Our crews need plenty of space to access this equipment. Thank you!

- 1 Trees over 40 feet**  
These trees must be planted at least 50 feet from the electrical wires and no closer that 35 feet from buildings to allow proper root development and minimize root damage to buildings
- 2 Trees under 40 feet**  
These trees may be planted 40 feet from electrical wires, but no closer.
- 3 Trees under 15 feet**  
These trees may be planted 15 feet from the electrical wires, but no closer.



**Al Haman**  
CEO

# A Note from your CEO

## Exciting research at University of Minnesota Morris

In energy circles, there is a lot of discussion around hydrogen as a low-carbon fuel. Located at the University of Minnesota – Morris, West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC), built a first-

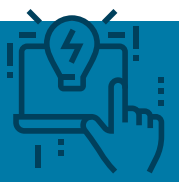
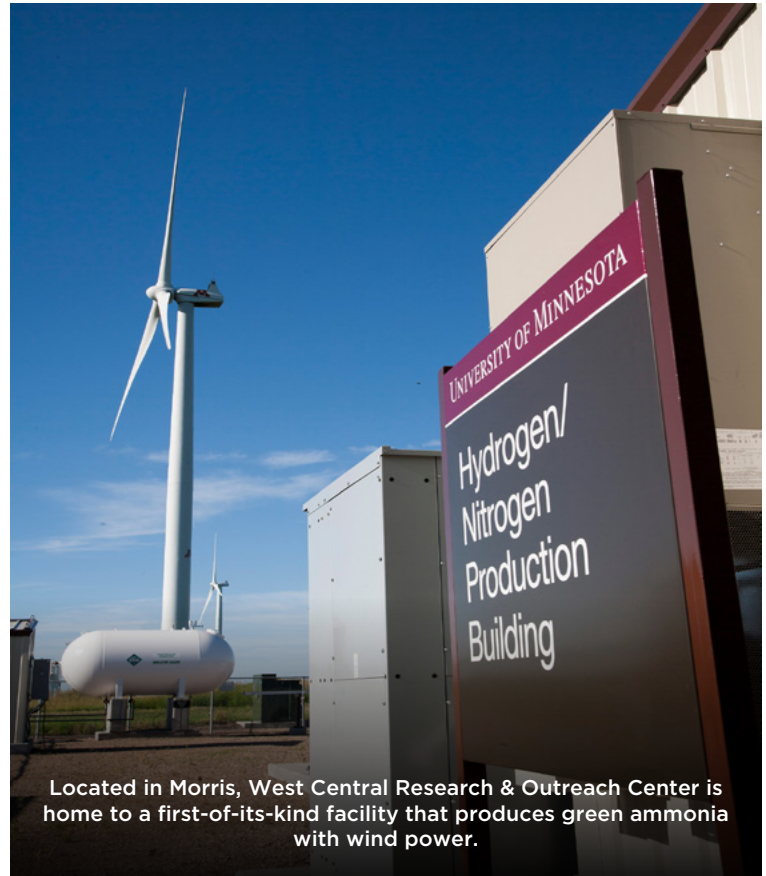
in-the-world wind-to-ammonia pilot plant in 2013. Through the success of that research, the WCROC has secured over 25 million dollars to design and upgrade the plant with cutting-edge technology, increasing the plant’s output to 1 metric ton per day production capacity.

Ammonia is most recognized as a nitrogen fertilizer but is also a good option as a hydrogen carrier. As a carrier, ammonia is up to 100 times cheaper to store and transport than hydrogen and can be used directly or converted back to hydrogen for use as a fuel. WCROC is interested in demonstrating the potential of ammonia and the economic benefits this fuel source can provide to rural areas like ours.

As demands for energy increase, Runestone Electric is looking to partner with members like the WCROC to explore ways ammonia-fueled generators may provide value to our local grid. There are times during the year when crop drying or increased energy demands on holiday weekends result in high system demands. Mobile gensets could help us minimize stress on the systems and help us delay costly system upgrades or extending lines to handle the seasonal demand. The flatbed-mounted generators of 250 to 300 kilowatts could meet the needs of about 150 to 200 average homes. Unlike lithium-ion batteries, which require recharging after several hours of use, the gensets operate over many hours fueled by nurse tanks like those used to apply anhydrous ammonia as a fertilizer.

Working together with our power supplier, Great River Energy, WCROC anticipates having a prototype ready for testing on our system in 2024. Early indications are that the concept should not require a significant upfront investment.

We commend the research at the UofM in Morris, and I will keep you updated as this project comes to life. It’s exciting to see the development of state-of-the-art technology taking place right in our backyard!



To learn more about this interesting project, check out recent articles at [www.cooperative.com/remagazine/articles/pages/hydrogen-power-co-ops-are-helping-a-new-fuel-industry-grow.aspx](http://www.cooperative.com/remagazine/articles/pages/hydrogen-power-co-ops-are-helping-a-new-fuel-industry-grow.aspx) and [www.tdworld.com/renewables/article/21262826/how-zero-carbon-ammonia-reduces-costs](http://www.tdworld.com/renewables/article/21262826/how-zero-carbon-ammonia-reduces-costs).

## REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - April 2023

- » Reviewed the Financial Report for April 2023. The margin for March was under budget due to the timing of expenses. Plant operations and maintenance expense were both ahead of budget. We completed our email/firewall/security/Microsoft Office project, and the related charges are expensed to general administrative expense. Kilowatt-hour sales were ahead of budget in March and made up for most of the variances in sales in January & February.
- » REA received two CoBank Sharing Success matching donations for United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties (\$780) and Breakfast on the Farm (\$850).
- » Approved new Member Advisory Council Members: Ralph Martin, Alexandria (District 2), Rodney Young, Nelson (District 6), Todd Malecha, Villard (District 6), Mark Thompson, Starbuck (District 7) and Deborah Anderson, Farwell (District 7).
- » Director Hjelle reviewed highlights the GRE Annual Meeting. Director Hjelle was re-elected secretary of the GRE Board of Directors.
- » **The regular June Board Meeting will be Tuesday, June 27, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.**



# 5 Things to Consider When Evaluating Your Cooling (and Heating) Options



## 1 Efficiency

Air Source Heat pumps are super energy efficient, as the unit moves both cooled and heated air throughout the home. ASHPs provide exceptional cooling and are up to 300% more efficient than other heating sources.



## 2 Old Air Conditioner = Expensive Lawn Ornament

A typical air conditioner runs very few days a year. A MN Dept. of Commerce study found that the average air conditioner runs 244 hours per year in our area. Air source heat pumps are utilized year-round, with some models designed to operate as low as -20° F! There are very few days in the year an air source heat pump is not available for use.



## 3 Size

An air source heat pump can be installed in the same spot as an air conditioner and does not require drilling or wells like a geothermal system. The installation is similar to an air conditioner but offers greater utility!



## 4 Rebates

REA offers installation rebates of up to \$800 based on the Heating Seasonal Performance Factor (HSPF). The HSPF is a heating efficiency rating for heat pumps. Check out REA's rebates to the right. Federal and State Tax incentives and programs offer thousands of dollars in additional incentives for Air Source Heat pump installations through the Inflation Reduction Act.



## 5 Lower Rate

In addition to the available rebates, REA offers off-peak rates for Air Source Heat Pumps providing significant ongoing savings during the heating AND cooling season! Check out REA's rates to the right.

# Cooling Rates & Rebates

## Rates

**Air Source Heat Pump**  
With automatic back-up ..... 7.24¢/kWh  
*(Or lower depending on complimentary dual fuel system)*

**Geothermal heat pump**  
With automatic back-up ..... 6.04¢/kWh

*With off-peak heating, off-peak rates may apply to electric water heating.*

## Rebates

### Quality Installation Program

**Air Source Heat Pump:**

- > HSPF 8.2/HSPF<sub>2</sub> 7 .....\$500
- > HSPF 9/HSPF<sub>2</sub> 7.7 ..... \$800

**Central Air Conditioning:**

- SEER 14.5 ..... \$50
- SEER 15..... \$50
- SEER 16+ ..... \$50

**Ductless Air Source Heat Pump**  
(Must be Energy Star® Rated) .....\$200

**Geothermal Heat Pumps** ..... \$400

**Air Source Heat Pump Paired with Plenum Heater or Boiler**  
Efficiency Rebate .....\$100

**Electronically Commutated Motor (ECM)**....\$25

**Smart Thermostat**.....\$25

**Air Conditioner Tune-up**.....\$25

**Cycled Air Conditioning**  
Bill credit in June, July and August..... \$7.50

*All rates and rebates are subject to change.*



**COMBINE REA REBATES WITH HEAT PUMP EFFICIENCIES TO START SAVING TODAY!**

Air Source Heat Pump



## Summer Home Check List Dehumidifier Basics

Using a dehumidifier to suck moisture out of the air can cost more than \$100 a year on electric bills. Consider replacing a standard dehumidifier with an energy efficient Energy Star® model. Replace your old dehumidifier with an Energy Star unit and receive a \$25 rebate from REA.

Contact REA at 800-473-1722 for a rebate form or visit [www.RunestoneElectric.com](http://www.RunestoneElectric.com).

## Is Your Electric Heat still on?

REA recommends checking boiler and baseboard heating systems to ensure they are turned off. This easy step can prevent a battle between your cooling and heating system, especially in basements.

Save money and energy this summer by turning off the heat!

# Ring-a-ling...REA Calling!

Members have reported when receiving a call from Runestone Electric, the call is showing up as "Suspected Spam". REA uses automated phone calls to alert members of planned power outages and to give payment reminders. We recommend adding our phone number **320-762-1121** to your contacts so you'll know it's REA calling and not a spam call.

## Adding REA to your contacts:

1. Open your contacts or phone book within your cell phone.
2. Press the add contact button. (May appear as a simple plus sign "+")
3. Enter Runestone Electric as the contact name and 320-762-1121 as the phone number.
4. Press the save or done button.



## NEWSLINE

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Alexandria, MN 56308

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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.

### Board of Directors

- District 1: Gary (Andy) Anderson, President
- District 2: Barbara Johnson, Director
- District 3: Audrey Hjelle, Director
- District 4: Dave Staples, Secretary
- District 5: Mike Loken, Vice President
- District 6: Joel Seela, Director
- District 7: Matthew Mattson, Treasurer

### 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.

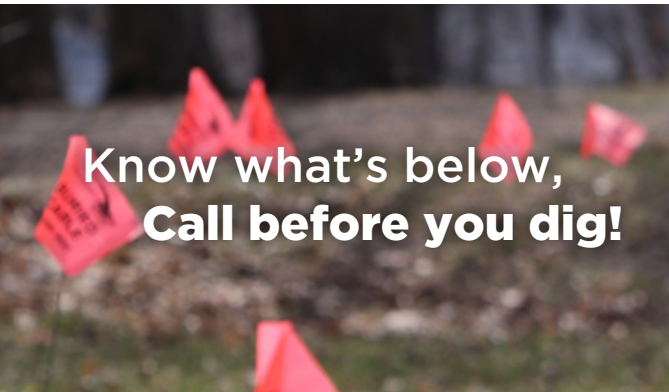
*REA will use reasonable diligence to furnish adequate and dependable electric service, but it cannot and does not guaranty continuous and uninterrupted service.*

**This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer**



## Thank You Operation Round Up® Board Members!

REA CEO, Al Haman, recognizes Janet Johnson, Barrett (left), and Deborah Anderson, Farwell (right), for serving on the Operation Round Up Trust Board and completing their six-year terms. The REA Board of Directors will appoint new directors in District 3 and District 7. Thank you, Janet and Deborah, for your time and dedication to the Operation Round Up program!



## Cogeneration Notice

*In compliance with Minnesota Adopted Rules relating to Co-generation and Small Power Production, Chapter 7835, Runestone Electric is required to interconnect with and purchase electricity from co-generators and small power producers that satisfy the conditions of a qualified facility. Runestone Electric has available and will provide free information to all interested members regarding rates and interconnection requirements. An application for interconnection is required for a qualifying facility to interconnect and operate in parallel with the cooperative's distribution system and is subject to approval by the cooperative. For more information on cogeneration please visit: [www.runestoneelectric.com/energy-wise-programs/renewable-energy](http://www.runestoneelectric.com/energy-wise-programs/renewable-energy)*

## Twins FREE! YOUTH BASEBALL CLINIC!

**SATURDAY, AUG. 5 / ALEXANDRIA, MN**  
OPEN TO EVERYONE, AGES 6-12!

### FIELD:

Alexandria Area High School  
Softball Complex  
4300 Pioneer Rd SE  
Alexandria, MN 56308

### HOST:

Alexandria Public School  
Community Education and  
Runestone Electric

### TIME:

10:00 – 12:00 PM

### REGISTER:

PLAYBALLMN.COM

