



# NEWSLINE

May 2024

Scholarship Winners pg 3 • Call Before You Dig! pg 4

## MEMBERS GATHER FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

Runestone Electric Association (REA) held its Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 25, at the Alexandria Area High School Performing Arts Center. Board of Director seats were determined in Districts 2 and 5, and scholarships were awarded to 26 students.

REA's bylaws allow for uncontested director elections to be elected by acclamation. In District 2, Barbara Johnson ran unopposed and was reelected, and in District 5, Mike Loken ran unopposed and was reelected.

Board President Andy Anderson and CEO Al Haman reported on the cooperative's activities and financial condition during the business meeting. "Safety is a priority at REA. The board, management, and most importantly, our employees take safety very seriously in everything they do," said President Anderson. He also highlighted the highly successful Operation Round Up program, the Member Advisory Council, and the Cooperative Network Builder Award recently presented to District 3 Director Audrey Hjelle.

"At year-end, the cooperative's total assets were \$103 million. That includes plant assets like the office and warehouse, lines, poles, and transformers. All our ratios exceed lending requirements. The cooperative finished 2023 with 231 new services built," said CEO Haman. Minnesota's new carbon-free by 2040 law, MISO's responsibility for electric reliability and management of the wholesale power markets, renewable energy systems owned by REA members, and electric vehicle use in the REA service territory were also discussed as part of the CEO Report.

Immediately following the adjournment of the meeting, the Board of Directors held a Reorganization Meeting to elect officers. Elected were Gary (Andy) Anderson (District 1), President; Mike Loken (District 5), Vice President; Matthew Mattson (District 7), Treasurer; and Dave Staples (District 4), Secretary. Other directors include Barbara Johnson (District 2), Audrey Hjelle (District 3), and Joel Seela (District 6).

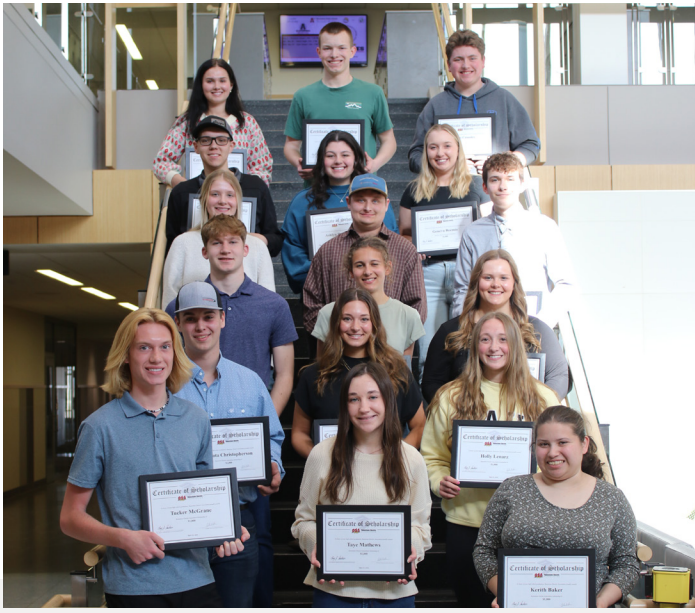
### RE-ELECTED IN 2024



**Barbara Johnson**



**Mike Loken**



Scholarship recipients were recognized during the meeting. Students that were able to attend include: From lower left, left to right: Tucker McGrane, Taye Mathews, and Kerith Baker. Dakota Christopherson, Jalyn Halverson and Holly Lenarz. Gavin Engelbrecht, Alexa Blume and Callie Glawe. Taylor Suchy, Carter Reinke and Allex Schmidt. Hunter Walz, Ashlyn Bergemann and Geneva Reemts. Haley Shea, Levi Johnson and Ean Crossley.



**Al Haman**  
CEO

# A Note from the CEO

## Highlights of the Annual Meeting

Over the last year, there has been much discussion around Minnesota’s new carbon-free by 2040 law, renewable energy, and electric vehicles. I provided an update on these subjects at the Annual Meeting and

thought I’d recap a few items I shared during my report to the membership.

- MISO is our region’s organization responsible for electricity reliability and management of the wholesale power markets. MISO’s geographic region runs from Manitoba to the Gulf of Mexico and we are in the north region. On an annual basis, wind currently makes up 15% of the fuel supply. Natural gas and coal still produce most of the energy used in MISO. Conditions for reliability, availability, and cost of power vary dramatically between MISO’s three regions, but we often see MISO referenced in publications without distinction between them. That’s something to keep in mind. A situation in one part of MISO doesn’t necessarily impact the entire footprint.
- Great River Energy, REA’s wholesale power provider, has 25% renewables in its energy portfolio. They are in a position to meet the carbon-free by 2040 milestones of 60% by 2030 and 90% by 2035. However, a portion of these goals are projected to be met by using renewable energy credits that are being banked or purchased. GRE will continue to work toward 100% by 2040, but significant breakthroughs in technology, specifically utility-scale batteries, must happen to make that possible.
- REA members have 64 solar and 8 wind systems interconnected with the distribution system. These are what we call net-metered systems. The relatively small backyard and rooftop systems are installed by

members to reduce the amount of power that must be purchased from REA, and in some cases, to deliver excess power to REA. That excess power is purchased from the system owner at a value just below our general service retail rate. Of the 259 million kWhs purchased by REA in 2023, only 0.3% was member-generated.

- We monitor electric vehicle (EV) adoption to ensure we have an adequate supply of electricity and the system to deliver it. In 2019, we estimated about 37 EVs in Pope, Douglas, Grant, and Stevens counties. By January 2023, there were 130. That’s an increase of 350%, which closely aligns with statewide growth.
- To meet the carbon free by 2040 law, not only do we need more wind and solar, but significant investment must be made in new transmission lines to move the power from windy areas to load centers. Due to a commercial wind farm’s large footprint and permitting challenges, rural areas will continue to see the bulk of wind development. Locally, we have two large, regional transmission projects planned for our area to be built in the next few years.
- In January, REA was approved for a \$25,000,000 construction loan from the USDA. The loan will cover construction needs for the next four to six years. It funds the construction of line extensions to new accounts, replacement of older powerlines, construction of a new substation, improvement of reliability, addition of smart grid technology, and upgrade of our load management equipment.

Thanks to everyone who attended our Annual Meeting. The challenges are real and change is happening quickly. But we will continue to work to meet your expectations and provide safe, reliable, and affordable electricity.

## REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - February & March 2024

### February

- » Reviewed the Post Closing Financial Report for 2023 and the Financial Report for January 2024 noting sales were down for January 2024 and expenses were ahead of budget, both contributing to a negative margin for the month.
- » STAR Energy Service Compliance Specialist Lisa Tickhill presented the 2023 Safety Year in Review.
- » Accepted locating contract as part of the 2024 Operations and Maintenance Budget.
- » Approved new Member Advisory Council members: Dist. 1 - Mary & Charlie Bettermann, Dist. 2 - Catherine Scholer Kliewer & Dean Kliewer, Dist. 3 - David Redepenning, Dist. 5 - Larry Zilliox.

### March

- » Reviewed the Financial Report for February 2024 noting with the mild weather, sales are down significantly. This is also contributing to margins being below budget. January and February kWh sales are down 6% from last year and 11% from budget.
- » Accepted the 2023 Audit Report. A clean opinion was issued.
- » Approved John Rolf to represent District 2 on the REA Operation Round Up Trust Board.
- » Approved refunding members’ unretired allocations of GRE capital credits at 100% for 1995 and approx. 21.5% for 1996, 12.8% for 2013 and 10.7% for 2014.
- » **The regular May Board Meeting will be Thursday, May 30, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.**

# Congratulations to REA Scholarship Recipients!

*We wish you the very best!*

REA's Scholarship Program is funded through unclaimed capital credits. This is money that would otherwise be claimed by the State of Minnesota. Scholarship applicants are required to have a parent or legal guardian that is a member of REA. Winners were determined through a random drawing.



**Tucker McGrane**  
Parents: Josh McGrane & Cassie McGrane  
*Carlos, MN*



**Taye Mathews**  
Parents: Chad & Carla Mathews  
*Miltona, MN*



**Jalyn Halverson**  
Parents: Jay & Angie Halverson  
*Carlos, MN*



**Brayden Larson**  
Parents: Brent & Michelle Larson  
*Alexandria, MN*



**Holly Lenarz**  
Parents: Thomas & Denise Lenarz  
*Sartell, MN*



**Dakota Christopherson**  
Parents: Timothy & Amy Christopherson  
*Alexandria, MN*



**Alex Schmidt**  
Parents: David & Amanda Schmidt  
*Evansville, MN*



**Callie Glawe**  
Parents: Jeremy & Jessica Glawe  
*Hoffman, MN*



**Carson Anderson**  
Parents: Tyler & Kellie Anderson  
*Evansville, MN*



**Alexa Blume**  
Parents: Dominic & Charlene Blume  
*Elbow Lake, MN*



**Taylor Suchy**  
Parents: Patrick & Lana Suchy  
*Brandon, MN*



**Gavin Engelbrecht**  
Parents: Darren & Tara Engelbrecht  
*Alexandria, MN*



**Rylee Bundermann**  
Parents: Steven & Karen Bundermann  
*Alexandria, MN*



**Kadyne Weber**  
Parent: John & Sarah Weber  
*Alexandria, MN*



**Hunter Walz**  
Parents: Michael & Nadine Walz  
*Alexandria, MN*



**Levi Johnson**  
Parents: Adam & Jill Johnson  
*Garfield, MN*



**Ashlyn Bergemann**  
Parents: Daniel Bergemann & Lisa Anderson  
*Alexandria, MN*



**Owen Draper**  
Parents: Michael & Kelli Draper  
*Alexandria, MN*



**Geneva Reemts**  
Parents: Randy & Sara Reemts  
*Alexandria, MN*



**Kyle Mages**  
Parents: James & Tricia Mages  
*Osakis, MN*



**Carter Reinke**  
Parents: Keith & Angie Reinke  
*Osakis, MN*



**Kerith Baker**  
Parents: Kevin & Connie Baker  
*Villard, MN*



**Ean Crossley**  
Parents: Larry & Darla Crossley  
*Carlos, MN*



**Dane Anderson**  
Parents: Mikkel & Amanda Anderson  
*Kensington, MN*



**Haley Shae**  
Parents: Adam & Michelle Shae  
*Glenwood, MN*



**Emaria Sanow**  
Parents: Jason & Vanessa Sanow  
*Glenwood, MN*

# What are Those Markers?

With construction season upon us, you may see flags or other markers within the road right of ways or perhaps even in your yard. Here's why:

When notified by Gopher State One Call, REA will mark our underground wire with red flags and red spray paint. Other utilities will mark their equipment with different colors (see chart below). It is required by law to call Gopher State One Call before you dig. If you see red markers, it doesn't always mean REA is conducting the work, it could be anyone who requested the locate, such as another utility, an excavator, or even you.

If the markers are white and not red, they are representing proposed excavation. White markers can be used by anyone preparing for an excavation project. REA uses stakes with white ribbon, like pictured to the right. If you see these, they typically represent where we will be plowing in new underground or replacing old underground.



**Red Locating Markers**



**White Marking Stakes**

Color Coding For Marking Underground Utilities	
<b>White</b>	Area of proposed excavation
<b>Pink</b>	Temporary Survey Markings
<b>Red</b>	Electric
<b>Yellow</b>	Gas, Oil, Steam, Propane
<b>Orange</b>	Communication, CATV, Fiber
<b>Blue</b>	Water
<b>Purple</b>	Reclaimed Water, Irrigation
<b>Green</b>	Sewer

### Quick Note about locating:

Remember that utility power lines will be marked for free, up to your main meter. Underground powerlines from your main meter inward, however, are the responsibility of the member. Property owners need to call an electrician or a powerline locating company to have their private lines marked. A list of private powerline locators can be found at [gopherstateonecall.org](http://gopherstateonecall.org).

## NEWSLINE

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**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.*

**Sign up to get text messages on control days!**  
Simply text #loadcontrol to 22300.  
*Msg and data rates apply.*

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

## Capital Credits are REA Members' Ownership in the Cooperative

Capital credit checks were mailed mid April to the last known address that REA has for the membership. Please be sure to contact our office with updated address information. If you received a check for an REA member who is now deceased, please contact the REA office at 800-473-1722 or email [rea@runestoneelectric.com](mailto:rea@runestoneelectric.com).

For more information on capital credits, Scan the QR code to the right or visit: [www.runestoneelectric.com/about-rea/capital-credits](http://www.runestoneelectric.com/about-rea/capital-credits)



**Make Safety A Priority This Planting Season. ALWAYS look up and live!**



Photo credit: Deb Johnson, Evansville