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NEWSLINE

July 2025

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REA builds “All-Electric” home in 1960

It’s hard to imagine a home without today’s modern appliances, such as an electric refrigerator or washing machine. However, in 1960, the average home on REA only used 415 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per month, compared to 1,400 kWh today. It took time for home appliances to become part of everyday life.

REA set out to change this by building a Gold Medallion Home in 1960 to promote all-electric living. Once completed, over 5,000 guests came to tour the home, some coming as far as North and South Dakota. Visitors were in awe of the electric heating system, which featured thermostats for individual room temperature adjustment, electric push-button plumbing controls,

lighting in the roof overhang to illuminate sidewalks, and many other appliances we now take for granted.

To achieve the Gold Medallion Award, no natural gas or LP could be used. After being on display for several months, the house was sold.

A lot has changed in sixty-five years. Al and Sharon Quam are the current owners of the home and Crestwood Hills is fully developed. We thank the Quams for allowing us to visit their home. It’s fun to see how the Gold Medallion Home has evolved!



Crowds came to see the Gold Medallion All-Electric Home in undeveloped Crestwood Hills North of Alexandria.





Al Haman
CEO

A Note from the CEO

REA shines during safety inspection program

At Runestone Electric Association, we place an emphasis on safety and participate in the National Rural Electric Association's "Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program," which we refer to as RESAP. This program is

nationwide and an important tool for us to build a strong safety program.

The program consists of five components: leadership commitment, performance measures, safety health check, verification and observation, and safety improvement plan.

Most steps are completed annually, except for "verification and observation," which is conducted every three years. In May, it was our turn to invite a team to complete this step.

The process involves a group of our peers from other cooperatives in the state and a statewide coordinator from the Minnesota Rural Electric Association gathering unannounced at the cooperative for an on-site audit. We chose an unannounced visit because we want a fair assessment of our situation, rather than a scheduled day, which we could prepare for. This year, the observation team was made up of 10 individuals with varying backgrounds.

There were 17 areas of focus, ranging from inspecting office spaces and vehicles to visiting crews working in the field. Both office and field employees are interviewed to assess their understanding of safety concepts and work procedures. Each item reviewed is given one of four rankings by the observation team: strong, satisfactory, minor improvement, or needs attention.

I'm proud to report that we received 16 satisfactory rankings and one strong performance in the "crew visit" category. This category is for worksite observation where the team visits crews working in the field and breaks down the job for proper procedures. Employees are pulled aside and asked questions about the job to determine knowledge of safety procedures as applied to the work assigned.

As with any inspection, while we received excellent rankings, some areas for improvement were identified. We have corrected the smaller issues, such as expired items in a first aid kit, but larger topics involving facility improvements that require expenditures will be added to our safety improvement plan so we can work on them within our budget process.

Making safety a priority is one of our core values and I want to congratulate the REA employee group on a very successful inspection. Keep up the great work!



REA recently participated in the National Rural Electric Association's Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program receiving satisfactory rankings in all categories and scoring a strong performance in the crew visit category.

REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - May 2025

- » Reviewed the Financial Report for April 2024. Year-to-date margin is ahead of budget due to operating expense being lower and we are seeing steady growth in member accounts.
- » Approved the Great River Energy the Emmons-Logan Energy Storage Agreement.
- » Approved the offer to amend the Great River Energy Transmission Service Contract.
- » President Anderson reported on the May Great River Energy

Board Meeting, including highlights of a tour of the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC) in Minneapolis.

- » Informed of CoBank's matching grants awarded to the United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties (\$858) and Breakfast on the Farm/Pope County Farm Bureau Association (\$850).
- » Approved changes to the Schedule of Charges to remove yard light temporary disconnects.
- » **The regular July Board Meeting will be Tuesday, July 29, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.**

REA Members Support Their Communities

Operation Round Up Distributes \$21,450 in June!



Representing some of the organizations receiving Operation Round Up® grants in June, **first row l to r** – Cindy Townsend, Alexandria HS Trap Team; Sonja Anderson, Rodella Jacobson, Ardie Piper, Tudor Ledum and Allen Wittrock, Let's Go Fishing Alexandria Lakes Area. **Second row l to r** – Terry Volker, Peace Lutheran Cemetery; Chelsa Glasser, Brandon Community Club; Christin Klimek, Lakes Area Humane Society; Joan Helgeson, Our Saviors Ten Mile Lake Quilters; Marion Wrolson, Trysil Bethesda Lutheran Cemetery Association; and Lisa Deputie, Radiothon to End Child Abuse. **Third row l to r** – Aaron Feltman, Love, INC; Suzanne Vold, Minnewaska HS Post Prom; Brian Dahl, Kid's Groundwater Festival; Jenna Crawford, Someplace Safe; Lindsey Gerdes and Katelyn Kotek, Douglas County HRA; Marlene Hippe, Indherred Lutheran Church Quilters; Elaine Kronberg, Alex Brush and Palette Club; Carol Anderon, Bethel Cemetery Association; Alma Contreras, Conexiones; Teri Shatek, Radiothon to End Child Abuse; Melisa Schueler, Community Preschool and Kayla Schneider, Radiothon to End Child Abuse. **Fourth row l to r** – Rich Moen and David Lundy, Operation Round Up Trust Board; Keith Schmidgall, Sharing Love & Hope; Nick McCollum, Radiothon to End Child Abuse; Jim Dyrdaahl, St. Luke's Cemetery Association; Rodney Young, Veterans Memorial Honor Guard, and Kalin Hacker, Carlos Fire Department.

Through the contributions of Runestone Electric Association's participating members, the Operation Round Up® Trust Board recently approved **\$21,450** 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 50 grant applications and distributed funds to 43 projects and programs this past quarter. Community-based projects and programs have received nearly \$1.3 million since the program's inception in 2003. On average, participating REA members contribute **\$6.07 for the year**. Proof that small change adds up. Best of all, 95% of all funds collected are distributed as grants.

Fire Departments & First Responders:

- » Carlos Fire Department – Hoses & equipment (\$1,000)
- » Lowry Fire Department – Upgrade Jaws of Life (\$1,000)
- » Osakis Fire Department – Ice Rescue Suit (\$1,000)

Food Shelf:

- » Long Prairie Food Pantry – Food supplies (\$500)

Youth:

- » Boy Scout Troop 491 – Camping equipment (\$500)
- » Kid's Groundwater Festival – Local event (\$500)
- » Minnewaska Area Post Prom (\$200)
- » Morris Post Prom (\$200)
- » Community Preschool – Art supplies (\$300)
- » Alexandria Area HS Trap Team – Supplies (\$250)
- » Radiothon to Prevent Child Abuse – Local event (\$1,000)
- » Stevens County 4H – Clay target team (\$500)
- » Grant Co. Collaborative – Halloween carnival (\$500)

- » Alex Brush & Palette Club – Children's workshop (\$200)
- » Kalon Prep Academy – Post graduation celebration (\$300)

Seniors:

- » Hoffman Senior Living – Wandering garden (\$1,000)

Community:

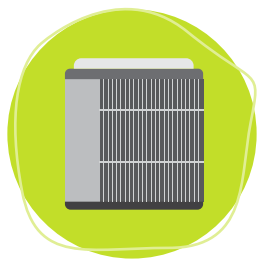
- » Douglas County HRA – Security & utility deposits (\$500)
- » Trysil Bethesda Lutheran Cemetery – Maintenance (\$300)
- » Our Saviors Ten Mile Lake Quilters – Supplies (\$300)
- » Bethel Memorial Cemetery Association – Maintenance (\$300)
- » Lakes Area Human Society – Spay/neuter project (\$500)
- » Brandon Community Club – SummerFest (\$250)
- » Friends of Douglas County Fair – Kids play area (\$500)
- » Prairie Harvest Fest (\$250)
- » Explore Alexandria Tourism – AED project (\$500)
- » Prairie Woodcarvers – Supplies (\$500)
- » Indherred Lutheran Church Quilters – Supplies (\$300)

- » Windmill Project – Events (\$500)
- » Christina Lake Lutheran Quilters – Supplies (\$300)
- » Let's Go Fishing Alexandria Lakes Area – Boat storage (\$1,000)
- » Garfield Community Club – Garfield Days (\$250)
- » Sharing Love & Hope – Summer food packs for kids (\$1,000)
- » St. Luke's Cemetery Association – Signage (\$300)
- » Peace Lutheran Cemetery – Maintenance (\$300)
- » Bethel Cemetery Association – Maintenance (\$300)
- » St. Paul's Cemetery Corporation – Maintenance (\$300)
- » Veterans Memorial Honor Guard – Uniforms & flags (\$1,000)
- » Van Loon Cemetery Association – Maintenance (\$300)
- » Love INC – Fuel/grocery cards (\$1,000)
- » Conexiones – 2025 event (\$250)
- » True Friends – Camp scholarships (\$500)
- » Elk Lake Beach – Slide replacement (\$500)
- » Someplace Safe – Empowerment group supplies (\$1,000)

The deadline for the next round of funding is **August 8, 2025**. Application forms can be completed at www.RunestoneElectric.com

Ways to save on your electric bill

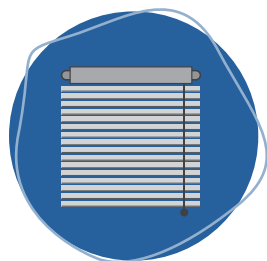
The summer heat can sometimes feel impossible to beat. Your air conditioner (A/C) is working overtime to try and keep your home or business cool and comfortable. The harder your A/C is working, the higher your electricity bill could be. Help out your home and your wallet by trying these simple ways to save on your summer electricity bill.



Regularly inspecting your A/C unit can ensure it is functioning as efficiently as possible. Vacuum air vents regularly to remove dirt, dust and pet hair build-up. Replacing a dirty A/C filter every month or two can lower your energy usage. Get an AC or heat pump tune-up and receive a \$25 rebate from REA.



You heard us right! A conventional oven can heat a house or apartment and force your A/C to keep up. This summer, bust out the crockpot and fire up the grill to enjoy some delicious summertime meals while also saving on your electricity bill!



The best thing you can do to avoid sunbathing in your living room is to keep the blinds closed on southern and western-facing windows. Open northern-facing windows to allow natural light into your home without heating it up.



Don't let the savings a fan could offer breeze past you! A ceiling fan works great when paired with your A/C unit. The wind chill effect created by a fan allows you to keep your thermostat four degrees higher without a change in comfort.



Runestone Electric
ASSOCIATION

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District 5: Mike Loken, Vice President
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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

5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Source: call811.com

Working on an outdoor project? Always call 8-1-1 first, because you never know what's below.
Here are five easy steps for safe digging:

1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before you start.



2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility-owned lines.



3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for the duration of your project.



5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project.

