

VOLTS & VIEWS

Roseau Electric Cooperative, Inc.

JANUARY 2018

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Tony and Lori Reller's "Holiday Farm" gave horse-drawn sleigh rides during the annual Wannaska Santa Day last December, 2016.

Wannaska survives the trends of rural decline By Kellie Knight

Reprinted with permission from the Warroad Pioneer

Rural America faces plenty of economic challenges; from the sharp decline in the number of family farms and, in turn, the small town economies that supported them, to the disproportionate reliance on manufacturing jobs, to a severe shortage in child care providers.

Of course, these are broad-stroke issues within a greater problem facing the country at large, but despite the gloomy outlook touted by commissioned studies, universities and rural betterment institutes across our 50

states, there are still small community success stories happening everywhere you look.

Wannaska is one such story.

Twenty-five miles south of the Canadian border on Highway 89, the small community bearing the Ojibwe word for the Roseau River lies on the south fork of the winding tributary. A bedroom community for the likes of Polaris (13 miles away), Marvin Windows (35 miles away) and even Digi-Key in Thief River Falls (58 miles away), Wannaska is unincorporated

and doesn't list a population on its road sign. But it's actually those kinds of traits that are a draw to some of the residents.

"We like it because it isn't a town," Ward Knight said. Knight runs his construction company, Anglewood Builders, from his residence in Wannaska. "It has the feel of a community but without all the hubbub and governmental noise of an actual town."

Holly Braaten also lives and works in Wannaska, running a day care cen-

continued on page 4

VOLTS & VIEWS

JANUARY 2018 – Vol. 63, No. 1

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF

Roseau Electric Cooperative, Inc.

1107 3rd Street N.E.

The Volts & Views (USPS-663420) is published monthly by Roseau Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 100, Roseau, MN 56751. Periodicals postage paid at Roseau, MN. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ROSEAU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., P.O. Box 100, Roseau, MN 56751.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Chairman Mark Sax
Vice Chairman Jim Hallan
Secretary-Treasurer Collin Jensen
Directors Roger Amundson, Shawn Gust,
Wes McFarlane, Dale Moser,
Joe Tesarek, Mike Wahl

Tracey Stoll General Manager
Ryan Severson Assistant Manager
Jeremy Lindemann Member Services
Mike Millner Line Superintendent
Stephanie Johnson Office Manager

Regular Business Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Phone (218) 463-1543

OUTAGE CALLS: 463-1544;
Toll-Free 1-888-847-8840

MINNESOTA STATE ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS

7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

Kittson, Northwest Angle, Polk
and part of Marshall Counties:

Wayne Bergstrom – 701-520-9771

Pennington, Roseau and part of
Marshall Counties:

Bryan Holmes – 218-686-1413

Lake of the Woods County:

Curt Collier – 218-966-5070

Beltrami County:

Davis Smid – 507-227-2772

Any time you or an electrician does wiring or other electrical work at your home or farm, Minnesota state law requires a state wiring inspector to conduct a proper inspection of the work. A rough-in inspection must be made before any wiring is covered. A final inspection is also required. For more information visit dli.mn.gov and go to the electrical page.

Gopher State One Call
1-800-252-1166 or 811
www.gopherstateonecall.org



Anyone who plans to dig is required by law to notify the state of their intentions at least 48 hours in advance. All digging requires the 48-hour notification so that buried telephone line, television cable, pipelines, utility electrical lines, municipal water and sewer lines can be located to ensure that none will be severed or damaged.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Roseau Electric Cooperative is committed to providing its member-owners low cost, high quality, safe and reliable electricity with friendly, efficient and knowledgeable service.



Happy New Year!

Tracey Stoll, General Manager

2018 budget with no rate increase

Are you watching what we post as operating statistics from month to month? Through October, we were significantly behind 2016 in sales, but then followed with a very respectable November month of sales. Our core business is selling energy, and when we're not selling enough of our core product, we have very few "levers" to pull to make the budget work. A cold January, February, November and December make for a good year. February 2017 was not cold, so we started the year off on a bad foot, but have now recovered. We expect to end 2017 with better-than-budgeted operating margins – those dollars which are then allocated back to you, the member.

Your board of directors just passed the 2018 budget with projected expenses of \$18.5 million. This is the first year in a while where we actually see a small (\$41,000) decrease from the previous year. Minnkota has announced that there will be no wholesale rate increase in 2018, and we will follow with no planned retail rate increase in 2018. What that really means is that I'm expecting a good January and February to start the year right.

This also means that you as a member should prepare to pay more (especially on March 21 when you pay your February bill) than you did in 2017. Many of our members were not prepared for their November billing, and we were here to listen and walk you through what made for such sticker-shock. A plugged in space heater, a bad thermostat on that space heater, or just not being used to how much heat is needed

when the cold weather makes its demands a little early in the season were all contributors.

New outage/after hours

As we close the year, your cooperative is transitioning to a new after-hours call provider. Recently, Garden Valley Telephone notified us that it will discontinue that service, and we have made arrangements to use Cooperative Response Center (CRC), headquartered in Austin, Minn. That changeover will have happened before you receive this newsletter, and I'm hoping for a seamless transition.

Some future benefits of using CRC will be an integrated outage management system that eventually can be viewed on our website for any member to access. Also, preemptive calling for planned outages, an area of improvement that we've heard about loud and clear, will be better managed with multiple points of contact. As always, I look forward to your feedback as to where we can continue improving our service to you.

Happy New Year!

POWER OUTAGE?

To report an outage, call **463-1544**
or toll-free
1-888-847-8840

From the line

Mike Millner, Line Superintendent



It seems like yesterday that I wrote the last article for *Volts & Views*. The time seems to pass faster as the years go by. We lose friends and people who have passed through our lives too quickly. I still have a few things on my bucket list to take care of. I also have a few regrets. I wish I would have reached out to a friend of mine when he could have used an open ear, but it's too late now. How about you? Do you have something you have wanted to do or see? Is there someone you need to make amends with? Have you always wanted to change careers? This is the time to make some changes in your lives because a new year is soon here. Don't be the person who has to say, "I wish that I would have." Be the person that can say, "I did it all." Remember, it is not possible to have a full day of work and fun without getting up in the morning.

We were able to dodge a few of the icings on power lines. Some of our neighbors to the south had some minor problems. We had a few days and nights

of wet snow and winds that gave us some trouble. For the most part, we have been very lucky. I also would like say my predecessors did a great job in organizing our line construction and maintenance projects and not letting our electrical system deteriorate to the point that any small storm would cause massive power issues. It is my goal to continue that action and maintain a safe and reliable power line right of way. We are doing plenty of mowing and tree cutting this winter. If you know of an area that needs our attention, give me a call at 218-689-3816.

I hope everyone has a happy new year. I will leave you with a few quotes: "In the end, it's not the years in your life. It's the life in your years," and "Life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to it."

With that said, keep warm, stay safe and I hope to see you on the lake ice fishing. I will be in the fish house that is catching the fish. Ha, ha.

Until our paths cross, Mike



Jedd Von Ende and Devyn Brandt clear right-of-way areas.



Neal Vatnsdal mows right-of-way areas.

FOR SALE ON BIDS

2003 CHEVROLET SILVERADO DIESEL



- 253,000 miles
- Front seal leaking on transmission
- "As is," no warranty

2004 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 2500 4WD



- 315,207 miles
- With utility boxes
- "As is," no warranty

2003 FREIGHTLINER DIESEL 4WD



- 160,840 miles
- Altec digger derrick and bucket
- "As is," no warranty

Submit all sealed bids to Mike Millner at the REC office.

BIDS WILL BE OPENED ON JAN. 26 AT 3 P.M.

Call REC at 463-1543 for more info M-F 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.



Children use the outdoor ice rink in Wannaska, which is tended by members of the Wannaska School Rink & Rec group. (Photo <http://www.facebook.com/wannaska.school.rink>)

Wannaska *continued from page 1*

ter. Holly joked that her husband, who is a Polaris employee, imported her from Edina, Minn., and she admitted it was a culture shock at first. “I do miss the shopping and restaurants that the bigger city has to offer,” she said, “but now I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else. I love the small town community. Everyone looks out for each other, and it’s so peaceful and quiet.”

The 10 children of Holly’s Tiny Hands Day Care can often be spotted out and about in the community going to the post office, taking walks or picnicking at the park. “I love running my business in a small town,” Braaten said. “Everyone in the community loves the kids, and businesses in town open the doors for us when we’re out

strolling around. They are so welcoming.”

Writer and national community activist Arthur Morgan, who was active during FDR’s tenure as president, believed that small town America was an incubator for the positive characteristics of society. “The roots of civilization are elemental traits - goodwill, neighborliness, fair play, courage, tolerance, open-minded inquiry, patience,” Morgan said. Throughout his life, he taught that these traits are most successfully instilled down through the generations in small communities, and to witness the decline of small town culture is to watch the decline of the entire nation’s culture.

To lifelong Wannaska resident Elaine Billberg, this instillation of values is a core facet of small-town life. “People always say it’s a great place to raise kids,” she said. “That’s one thing about country life, kids learn to work.” The community also comes together when people are in need. “I’m sure you probably see this in every small community,” she said. “But here, if someone has a hardship, if there is a death or illness, people go over with food and help out how they can. Farmers will help each other get

crops in. It’s really how close-knit the community is that makes it prosper.”

Small yet prosperous communities such as Wannaska are, in some ways, like a freshwater stream emptying into a large body of saltwater. Families in rural areas work hard at raising their youth to be good and productive members of the community, kindhearted and compassionate, and when the young adults leave, as many of them do, the communities are then giving these values to the world. Where freshwater meets saltwater, an estuary is created, one of the most bountiful aquatic ecosystems there is.

An interesting real-world example is one of Wannaska School’s most famous exports, Garrett Hedlund, who is known for his roles in films such as *Troy*, *Four Brothers*, *Tron: Legacy* and *Unbroken*. Hedlund is said to be a thoughtful actor, an optimistic personality and forever the farm kid from northern Minnesota.

“I was born with chores,” Hedlund was recently quoted as saying in a video series called “My North” created by MPLS St. Paul Magazine and presented by Explore Minnesota. Garrett spoke about going to school in Wannaska. “Our school was about 75 yards long; it had a little outdoor ice rink with a warming house that a local in the town would groom with a little irrigation tank that he had made, his own personal Zamboni. We were so far out that we were the first ones on the bus and the last ones off.”

The long bus rides for school kids or the shuttling responsibilities for parents were the only disadvantages Billberg could think of to living in a small community like Wannaska. Others might point to minimal opportunities for young adults and the need to travel for medical care or even fresh produce.

For Margo Lee, who lived in uptown Minneapolis for a time but then came back to be a part of the family business, the differences were jolting. “It was still a shock even though I grew up here,” Margo said. “But I do like that my commute, instead of



an hour drive, takes me two minutes now.”

According to demographic expert Bert Sterling of bestplaces.net, Wannaska (ZIP 56761) has seen a population decline of 24 percent in the last 17 years. Still, it has what its in-town residents need. A handful of businesses keep the community patterns alive and running like clockwork. Riverfront Station opens at 6 a.m. for commuters and coffee drinkers. Café 89 right across the street welcomes the regular coffee crew. “Mostly the guys,” Billberg chuckled, “they get everything pretty much solved.”

Locals are very loyal to Café 89, which has been around for more than six decades and is said to have unusually good food for a neighborhood joint. Holly Braaten said that walking over for Saturday morning breakfast is a standing tradition for her and her family.

Wannaska has one church, Riverside Lutheran, with a very active Sunday school and youth group program. The Wannaska Lion’s Club just celebrated 100 years and is another high-functioning aspect of the community. The brand new community center was built almost entirely with volunteer labor and through funds raised in and by the community. Bull Dog Storage

and Bergstrom’s Inc., an electrical contracting company, as well as a host of other home-based businesses we are likely unaware of, are also based in Wannaska.

Lee’s Trustworthy Hardware is also a staple of the community. The oldest business in Roseau County, Lee’s has been family owned and operated since 1906. Fourth generation Margo helps run the store with her parents, Kraig and Bonnie. “We have a little bit of everything,” Margo said. Open from 8:30-5:30 during the week, until 4 p.m. on Saturday and closed on Sunday, the small town business maintains small town hours, but it takes care of its neighbors. “Since everyone in the community knows how to get a hold of us, we open the store after hours if it’s an emergency,” Margo said. “The post office is also located in the store. And we stay open later during deer season and around the holidays.”

Lee’s is way more than a hardware store, as regular shoppers can attest. The store boasts over 40 feet of just toys. Plus, their sundries, treats, gift-



According to Bonnie Lee, Lee’s General Store, circa 1940s, carried groceries in addition to the current general merchandise and gift items.



(Photo courtesy of www.leeshardwarestore.com/)

ware and house décor sections make it a true destination, and during the holidays, Wannaska becomes just that.

December 9 was Santa Claus Day at the Community Center. From 11-2, kids met Santa, played games, had a free lunch and the Reller Family “Holiday Farm” offered wagon rides instead of using the sleigh due to a lack of snow cover. Simultaneously, Lee’s hosted a holiday open house, staying open till 7 p.m., offering door prizes, free coffee and cookies, as well as plenty of sales.

For barely being on the proverbial map, Wannaska certainly knows who it is as a community. It, and others like it, are the freshwater nutrients in an increasingly muddy delta. Even actor Garret Hedlund has talked about swimming upstream again in the future. “Everything that pushed me away is what pulls me back now,” he said in an interview with the DailyMail.com. “It’s the kind of life I’d like to give my kids when I have them.”



The Wannaska Community Center was built in 2011. This multipurpose facility is enjoyed year-round by folks throughout the area and beyond.

So, you want to be a Director

Three directors will be elected at the 2018 annual meeting scheduled for April 7. Directors whose terms expire in 2018 are District 1, James Hallan; District 6, Joe Tesarek; and District 9, Mark Sax. Directors Hallan and Sax will be filing for reelection. Director Tesarek does not intend to file.

Reports to:

- ▶ The membership

Objective:

- ▶ To establish relationships between the Board, the membership and the Manager
- ▶ Define principles and practices
- ▶ Delegate authority
- ▶ Analyze operations

Meeting attendance requirements:

- ▶ **Monthly board meetings:**
Board meetings are held 12 times per year, usually the fourth Wednesday of the month, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- ▶ **Other meetings:**
 - Roseau Electric annual meeting
 - Minnkota annual meeting
 - MREA district meetings
 - Other meetings to learn policies and procedures of the electric industry. Expect five to 12 extra days per year.

Board of Director Duties and Responsibilities

- Hire and delegate authority to the Manager.
- Maintain legal entity and practices.
- Review and update Bylaws.
- Require a continuous member and public relations program.
- Keep informed and grow in skills of the program.
- See that members are informed of operations.
- See that accurate minutes are prepared and maintained.
- Consider and adopt plans for objectives and goals.
- Review and update policies.
- Examine and approve annual budget and cash flow.
- Review and approve a sound financial plan.
- Establish policies and programs for good employee relationships.
- Assist in planning all meetings.
- Establish special or standing committees.
- Review responsibilities of Board and Manager.
- Approve the selection of consultants and attorney.
- Establish measures and controls to determine effectiveness of Management.
- Authorize and review annual financial audit.
- Implementation and enforcement of this position description is the responsibility of the Board of Directors.

2018 director elections

Roseau Electric Cooperative, Inc., is organized as a cooperative and is owned by its members. The membership elects a board of directors to represent them in the operation of the cooperative.

Three directors will be elected at the 2018 annual meeting scheduled for April 7 at the Roseau School Theatre in Roseau. The directors whose terms expire in 2018 are: James Hallan, District 1 (3-year term); Joe Tesarek, District 6 (3-year term); and Mark Sax, District 9 (3-year term).

Nomination by petition

No nominating committee will be used. All nominations will be done by petition, including the incumbents.

Any 10 or more members who reside in Districts 1, 6 or 9 may nominate an eligible member for a director position in that district. No member may be elected to a director position unless nominated in this manner. No write-in ballots shall be accepted. District 6 has an open seat as Joe Tesarek currently does not intend to file.

Petition forms are available at the cooperative's office

Director candidates must pick up a petition and a director packet at Roseau Electric Cooperative, Inc., in Roseau. The packet contains additional forms that must be signed and turned in before the deadline.

Petition for Nomination

The following members wish to nominate Insert name _____ for the three-year term in Districts 1, 6 or 9 Insert District 1, 6 or 9? _____ director position, and to place such name on the ballot for the April 7, 2018, election at the annual meeting of the Cooperative, in accordance with Article III, Section 5, of the bylaws.

PRINTED NAME	SIGNATURE	CUSTOMER NO.
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
18.		
19.		
20.		

The Cooperative must receive the completed petition no later than the close of business Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2018, at the annual meeting scheduled for April 7, 2018. Elections will be held for each of Districts 1, 6 and 9 for a three-year term.

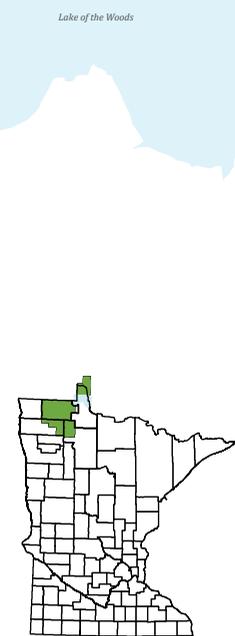
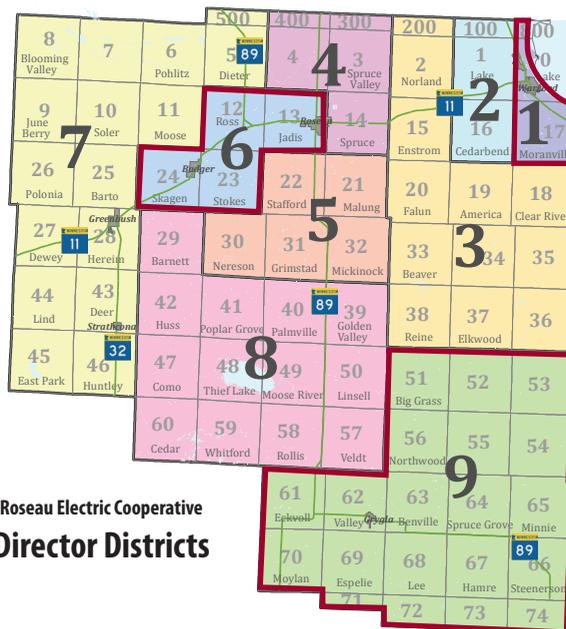
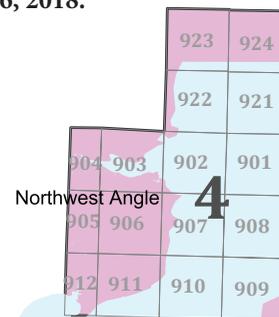
The directors whose terms expire in 2018 are as follows:

DISTRICT 1	DISTRICT 6	DISTRICT 9
3-year term	3-year term	3-year term
James Hallan	Joe Tesarek	Mark Sax

Any 10 or more members who reside in Districts 1, 6 or 9 may nominate an eligible member for a director position in that district. No member may be elected to a director position unless nominated in this manner. In the event of joint membership, only the signature of one joint member shall be acceptable.

Petition deadline

The cooperative must receive the completed petition no later than the close of business at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2018.





Need help with your home heating costs?

Applications for the 2017-2018 Energy Assistance Program are being taken by Northwest Community Action. To apply, please call Northwest Community Action at 1-800-568-5329 and request an application or visit our website at www.northwestcap.org.

Northwest Community Action serves households located in Kittson, Lake of the Woods, East Marshall and Roseau counties. Home visits are available for home-bound applicants upon request. Households requesting assistance in completing the application are encouraged to phone our office to set up an appointment.

Energy assistance eligibility is based upon household income and household size. Both homeowners and renters may be eligible. Households who live in subsidized housing but pay either heat or electric costs may also qualify.

Income Guidelines for three months of gross income	
Household Size	Maximum Income
1	\$ 6,250
2	\$ 8,173
3	\$10,096
4	\$12,019
5	\$13,942
6	\$15,865

Households may apply once during our program year of Oct. 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018.

NOTICE: You are responsible for your heating and electric bills until you hear from Northwest Community Action.

This program is funded by the Minnesota Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

OPERATING STATISTICS

	Monthly		Yearly	
	Nov. 2016	Nov. 2017	Nov. 2016	Nov. 2017
Members	6,441	6,452	6,441	6,452
kWh purchased	12,890,581	15,707,417	140,705,207	137,983,135
% change	(9.51%)	21.85%	(6.44%)	(1.93%)
Revenue	1,523,193	1,810,481	16,406,066	16,777,982
Cost of power	947,223	1,084,870	10,270,627	10,223,996
Other expenses	445,774	481,839	5,848,459	6,005,488
Operating margins	130,196	243,772	286,980	548,498
Nonoperating margins	(7,088)	12,128	114,812	74,059
Patronage dividends	-	-	206,968	188,280
Total margins	123,108	255,900	608,760	810,837

member connection

ENERGY TIP

Consider ENERGY STAR entertainment equipment. According to the Consumer Electronics Association, the average household owns 24 consumer electronics products, which are responsible for 12 percent of household electricity use. ENERGY STAR-certified audio/video equipment is up to 50 percent more efficient than conventional models.

SAFETY TIP

Did you receive any electronic gifts this year? Be sure to read the manual and understand the operation and safety information regarding use of any electronic equipment.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“May all your troubles last as long as your New Year’s resolutions!”

– Joey Adams

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Jan. 1 – Happy New Year!
Office is closed
- Jan. 15 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Jan. 21 – Electric bill is due

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

AFTER HOURS/OUTAGE NUMBER

Toll-free 1-888-847-8840
1-218-463-1544

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

1-800-252-1166 or 811

PAY BY PHONE

1-877-999-3412

SMARTHUB

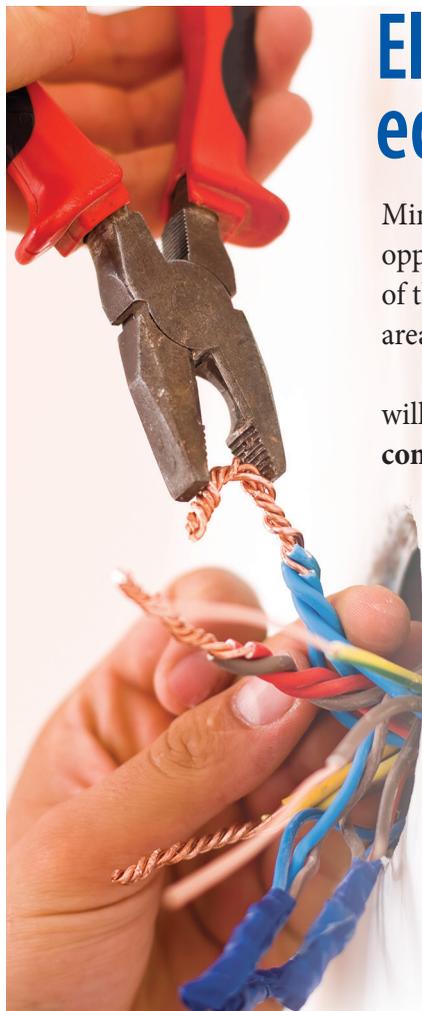
<https://roseauelectric.smarthub.coop/>

WEBSITE

www.roseauelectric.com



LIKE US ON
FACEBOOK
TO STAY
UP-TO-DATE!



Electrical contractor continuing education sessions set

Minnkota Power Cooperative and the associated systems will again provide an opportunity for area electricians to obtain credits for license renewal by attending one of the six continuing education classes being offered throughout Minnkota's service area.

The registration fee is \$75 for eight code credits. Taking the class on multiple days will not qualify for 16 code credits. Registration is online only at www.minnkota.com. Registration should be completed at least 10 days prior to the course.

For residential building contractor continuing education workshops, contact your local home builders association.

For more information about the program, call (701) 795-4292 or email questions to contractortraining@minnkota.com.

2018 ELECTRICAL WORKSHOPS

JAN. 23, 24

DoubleTree Inn

825 E Beaton Dr
West Fargo, N.D.

JAN. 30

Eagles Club

1270 Neilson Ave SE
Bemidji, Minn.

JAN. 31

*Bigwood
Event Center*

925 Western Avenue
Fergus Falls, Minn.

FEB. 6, 7

*Minnkota Power
Cooperative Headquarters*

5301 32nd Ave. South
Grand Forks, N.D.

**Get your
PowerSavers forms
and receipts in!**



**Grant Application
Deadline Feb. 28, 2018**

To be considered at the March 2018 meeting, grant applications must be received by **Feb. 28, 2018**. Grant applications are available at the REC office or by visiting our website at www.roseauelectric.com.