



## What does it mean to be a part of a cooperative?

Did you know not **ALL** electric utilities are the same? Some utilities are investor-owned (IOUs) while cooperatives such as Wild Rice Electric Cooperative, its members are partial owners. While both distribute electric energy to the region, there are some key differences between the two types of utilities – and cooperatives have some impressive benefits!

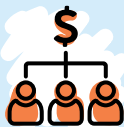
Being a member-owner of Wild Rice Electric Cooperative means you have a say in how we operate. All our decisions about maintaining reliable, affordable and safe electricity are made with our members – **LIKE YOU** – in mind.

Thank you for being a member of the cooperative!

### Investor-Owned Utilities

### Electric Cooperatives

#### OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE



Investor-owned utilities are **for-profit corporations** that are typically publicly traded in the stock market. Profits are distributed to shareholders.



Cooperatives are **not-for-profit organizations** that are member-owned and controlled. Profits made by co-ops are either reinvested in the co-op or returned to the members as capital credits.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS



IOUs have a board of directors that is chosen by shareholders with a goal of maximizing shareholder value. The board is often comprised of **folks outside of the communities being served**.



As a cooperative, our board of directors is made up of members from around your region – **your friends and neighbors**. Representatives are voted in by the membership and serve a three-year term on the board.

#### PRIMARY BUSINESS OBJECTIVES



An investor-owned utility's primary business objectives include **investments that yield the highest return for shareholders**. Their goals are often guided by profit.



Cooperatives operate first and foremost for their membership. Our primary priority is **always to act in the best interest of our members**. A few of the guiding principles for all cooperatives include the prioritization of reliability and the well-being of the community.

#### WHO THEY SERVE



Investor-owned utilities typically serve more **urban areas** and have many more customers on a mile of power line than a cooperative.



Electric cooperatives were formed to meet the growing electrical needs of **rural communities** when larger utilities wouldn't. They were formed by rural people to serve their rural neighbors, and that service continues today.



# STAFF COMMENTS

Director of Member Services  
and Communications

AROUND THE CO-OP ...

by Tommy Houdek

## Happy New Year!

On behalf of the employees and directors of Wild Rice Electric Cooperative, I would like to wish all of our members a Happy New Year. I hope that you all were able to celebrate the holiday season with family, friends and loved ones. The Cooperative has experienced a number of changes over the past year including the naming of our new President & CEO, Mike Wade; the launch of our new software conversion to National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC); and a new way for members to manage their accounts through our new SmartHub system. We are proud of our accomplishments achieved in 2023 and are excited to work on our member-benefiting goals in 2024.

## Off-Peak Electric

Wild Rice Electric Cooperative provides an excellent opportunity for its membership to significantly reduce electric heating costs through our off-peak programs. By participating in these programs, members can take advantage of a discounted rate savings equivalent to approximately half the cost of the general service rate. The key benefit lies in allowing your electrical heating load to be controlled during specific times, optimizing usage for greater efficiency. This not only translates into substantial financial savings for members but also contributes to a

more sustainable, responsible and environmentally conscious management of energy resources. The flexibility of Wild Rice Electric's off-peak programs gives the members freedom to choose a program that best suits their lifestyle and preferences. To learn more about our off-peak programs, contact our Member Services Department, we are happy to assist you.

## Congratulations

Wild Rice Electric would like to say congratulations as the Cooperative held its annual Employee / Director Appreciation Banquet on Thursday, November 30th. Special recognition was given to those celebrating milestones in their time here at the Cooperative.

• Directors **Russ Okeson** (45 years) & **David Hamre** (5 years)

• Director of Operations – **Al Brunner** (35 Years);

• Linemen – **Gary Neis** (30 years), **Ryan Omang & Cody Turner** ( each 15 years)

The Cooperative also celebrated those who retired in 2023

• Lineman – **Perry Doerfler**

• Meter Technician – **Bob Spaeth**

• Apparatus Technician – **Tim Voss**

• Mechanic – **Mike Vasilakes**

## Wild Rice Electric Annual Meeting Set

Wild Rice Electric has announced its Annual Meeting, scheduled for Thursday, April 18th, at the Shooting Star Event Center. The event promises an engaging evening featuring Director elections, a delightful dinner, entertainment by Blü Kanū, and a chance to win some great door prizes. The Nominating Committee will convene on Wednesday, January 17th, 2024 to review candidates for director positions. Those interested in becoming a director can find guidance in the article "How To Become a Director," included in this publication.

The Annual Meeting provides an excellent opportunity for members to actively participate in the Cooperative's governance and enjoy a night of information and entertainment. Wild Rice Electric is committed to serving its members and wishes everyone the very best in 2024.

## SAFETY TIP

### Walking on ice ...

Point your feet out slightly like a penguin! Spreading your feet out slightly while walking on ice increases your center of gravity. Bend slightly and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over the feet as much as possible. Extend your arms out to your sides to maintain balance.

## Highlights from the Board Room:

The Board of Directors held its monthly meeting on October 31, 2023. During the meeting, the 2022 Key Ratio Trend Analysis report was presented by Alison Deelstra, CFC Regional Vice President; and a presentation was given on electric vehicle ownership.

A quorum of directors was present and the following actions were taken:

• **Approved** the financial reports and statements for September 2023

• **Accepted** the third quarter Financial Review Committee report

• **Appointed** the 2024 Nominating Committee members

• **Approved** the monthly board and management policy review

• **Accepted** the management departmental reports

• **Accepted** the Minnkota Power report

• **Accepted** the Square Butte report

• **Accepted** the MREA report

The January regular meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Tuesday, January 23, 2024.

# How to Become a Director

The grassroots participation in nominating and electing directors is one of the most important powers that you, the members, have in controlling your Cooperative – Wild Rice Electric Cooperative, Inc. The Cooperative's service territory is divided into three director districts. Each of the districts is represented by three directors who are qualified members of the Cooperative and reside within the district to be represented. One director from each district is elected at each annual member meeting for a term of three years. If a circumstance arises where a director leaves his/her seat prior to the end of their term, a special election will be held to fill that director seat until the term would expire.

At the Wild Rice Electric Cooperative, Inc. annual meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 18, 2024, director elections for District 1, 2 and 3 will be held. This year the three-year terms of the following directors will expire at the 2024 Annual Meeting. They are: Larry Sollie, Lengby; Mark Habedank, Twin Valley; and Russell Okeson, Detroit Lakes.

## Persons eligible to become or remain a director of the Cooperative shall:

- **be a member in good standing** of the Cooperative, receiving Electric service at the member's primary residence in the district from which the director is elected prior to being nominated for director; provided further that "primary residence" is defined as the residence that is the chief or main residence of the member and where the member actually lives for the most substantial portion of the year;
- **have voting rights** within the district from which the director is to be elected;
- **not be employed by**, materially affiliated with, or have a material financial interest in any individual or entity which either is:
  - directly or substantially competing with the Cooperative; or
  - selling goods and services in substantial quantity to the Cooperative; or
  - possessing a substantial conflict of interest with the Cooperative;
- for purposes of this section, the terms "material" or "substantially" shall be interpreted as constituting a minimum of

5% of a member's total hours of employment, sales or income on an annual basis;

- **not be an employee** or not have been an employee of the Cooperative within the last three (3) years;
- of an employee, whereas found in these By-laws "close relative" means any individual who is, either by blood, law, or marriage, including half, step, foster, and adoptive relations, a spouse, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, or sibling, or principally resides in the same residence;
- **be only one**, and not more than one, member of a joint membership; provided, however, that none shall be eligible to become or remain a director or to hold a position of trust in the Cooperative unless all shall meet the qualifications hereinabove set forth;
- if a representative or agent of a member that is not a natural person, i.e., a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or similar, then the representative or agent designated as a nominee for director shall be an individual residing within the external boundaries of the district from which (s)he is nominated
- **never have been convicted** of a felony; and
- **agree to regularly attend** all board, regular and special meetings.

In accordance with Article III, Section 4 of the Bylaws; it shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint, not less than forty-five (45) days nor more than one hundred and twenty days (120) before the date of a members' meeting at which directors are to be elected, a committee on nominations consisting of nine (9) members in good standing, whereby three (3) members shall be selected from each district of the Cooperative so as to give equitable representation on the committee to the geographical area served by the Cooperative.

The Board of Directors appointed the Nominating Committee at their October monthly meeting. This Committee is scheduled to meet on **Wednesday, January 17, 2024** at 11 a.m. for the purpose of nominating one or more qualified member(s) from each district for each office of director slated for election, to be elected by the membership at large at the annual meeting, and shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least thirty (30) days before said meeting, a list of nominations.

If you are interested in being considered for nomination or if you know a member who you believe would be a qualified candidate, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee.

## The Nominating Committee for 2024 is as follows:

- **Mark Klinkhammer**, 40223 US Highway 59 SE, Winger, MN 56592  
PH: 218-938-4100
- **Raymond Sundrud**, 35563 300th St SE, Fosston, MN 56542  
PH: 218-435-1029
- **Michael Weik**, 14779 Cable Lake Rd SE, Mentor, MN 56736  
PH: 218-637-8250
- **John Darco**, 2785 Brothers Point Rd, Waubun, MN 56589  
PH: 218-473-2776
- **Marjorie Fabre**, 1215 300th St, Waubun, MN 56589  
PH: 218-473-2591
- **Karen Lefebvre**, 37175 County Rd 111, Waubun, MN 56589  
PH: 218-983-3128
- **Dwight Aakre**, 7612 290th St S Hawley MN, 56549  
PH: 701-371-4831
- **Bradley Lindstrom**, 16912 County Hwy 1, Lake Park, MN 56554  
PH: 218-238-5734
- **Richard Zurn**, 25472 Whiskey Creek Dr, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501  
PH: 218-847-8788

## Petition process

Any 15 or more members can make other director nominations in writing on or before **March 19, 2024**. Petitions for Nominations form can be found at [wildriceelectric.com](http://wildriceelectric.com) or contact Wild Rice Electric directly at 1-800-244-5709. Director candidates may only be nominated by the committee on nominations or by petition. Voting will take place during the Annual Meeting. The director candidate receiving the highest vote for each District will serve on the Board of Directors until the end of their designated term.





# \$58,000 granted to community nonprofits and educational organizations

The Wild Rice Electric Trust board met on Tuesday, December 5th, and awarded twenty-seven Operation Roundup grants for a total amount of \$58,000 to community nonprofits and educational organizations. The Wild Rice Electric Trust receives money primarily from two sources: 1) from our members volunteering to "round up" their electric bills; and 2) from unclaimed capital credit checks that have been unclaimed for seven years with the last known address to be in the state of Minnesota. The enrollment forms for rounding up your bill and the applications for applying for Operation Roundup grants can be found on our website or call our office at 1-800-244-5709.

**Eight local food pantries** were awarded \$750 each.

**Four local Reach Out for Warmth agencies** were awarded \$1,500 each.

Two area emergency service providers received Operation Roundup grants:

- **Elbow Lake-Tulaby Fire Department:** \$5,000 to aid the purchase of a Cascade System
- **Twin Lakes Volunteer Fire Dept:** \$5,000 to aid in the purchase of water rescue equipment

Several area communities received Operation Roundup grants that will help support community events:

- **American Legion Gustav Handegard-Post 181:** \$5,000 to aid in the purchase of personal property items related to the rebuilding of their American Legion building
- **St Michael's School:** \$2,000 to support their monthly

Community Family Fun Nights

- **Wild Rice Peacemakers:** \$5,000 to aid in the purchase of automatic setting equipment for shoot events

The following organizations received funds for educational purposes:

- **Freedom Christian Academy:** \$1,500 to aid in the purchase of laptop computers
- **CornerStone Community & Youth Center:** \$2,500 to support the purchase of STEAM lab items
- **Lake Park-Audubon School:** \$5,000 to support their high-tech greenhouse project
- **Ulen-Hitterdal School:** \$400 to purchase laptop computer to support new soundboard system
- **Norman County East School Fine Arts:** \$2,000 to support their Twin Cities-Fine Arts Trip

The following organizations received funds focused on our area youth athletic programs:

- **Mahnomen/Waubun Youth Wrestling:** \$2,500 to aid in the purchase of wrestling safety equipment;
- **UCB Badger Wrestling:** \$2,500 to aid in the purchase of wrestling gear

The following organizations received grants focused on the health and well-being of the communities:

- **Fair Meadows Foundation:** \$5,000 to aid in the purchase of a golf cart for residents' day outings
- **Grace & Grit:** \$2,100 to aid in the development of an obstacle course for use by their Wellness Horse-Human Partnership Therapy Program
- **Hi-way 32 SnoRiders:** \$500 to aid in the expense of conducting snowmobile safety classes

## Ads

### For Sale

Shop built fish house- 6 1/2'x9', wall furnace. 3 burner stove, 110-12 volt lights w/ Jiffy auger \$875 obo, 218-849-8963

Access roll tarp GM 68"Lx62"W:  
Grandma's estate TV's 1-Samsung, 1- Philips both flat screen 28"x18"; Marlin .22 cal rifle "Micro groove"/ walnut stock; 2 -15" wheel homemade trailer 5-1/2' by 8 FT; 10' melroe multiweeder 5-tine 3-pt mounted; stake pockets w/ wooden stakes for stacking firewood on pallets, 218-567-8292.

Truck trans jack 2 3/4 impact guns. New Northstar 8000 gen Honda moter. Shop built fish house. New handyman jack, 218-849-8963.

Good selection of skid steer attachments, snow, grapple, skeletal buckets various sizes, ice scrapers, pallet & hayforks plus, 701-261-3574.

24" 8 harness/10 treadle, 12 dent reed, older floor loom make unknown still works just used it for Krokbragd last week. Must pick-up \$400, 218-280-6623.

\$50-Euro Pro Model #F1086 5 Liter Electronic Deep Fryer, clean and in excellent condition. Manual included. Set of 4 Hankook i Pike M&S tires 265 70R 17 115T 8/32 tread depth-\$200, 218-847-2877.

32 ft gooseneck 5th wheel trailer w/ ramps. Triple axle. Good tires. Railroad ties \$1.00 each have 500-1,000 ties. Vikings official NFL jersey. Stitched lettering, anniversary patch, never worn. Early 50's one ton truck, doesn't run. 701-715-2837. No Saturday calls.

Massey Ferguson model 72 7ft. mid mount sickle mower with manuel, 1998 Dodge Durango, one owner never smoked in, 3 coulters, 3 cow stanchions, 1948 Ford coupe call 701-866-4681.

3/4" IR impactgun. 3/8" snap on impact gun. Trk axle seal installers. Several trk axle sockets. John Deere ser. tools. New handyman jack. Husky floor liner set 2019 GM pu, 218-849-8963.

MS271 STHIL CHAIN SAW. 3 years old used very little, asking \$300, 701-361-0729/ stuvey42@yahoo.com.

### Wanted

Honda 90 from the 1960s and xl125/ xl185 from the 1980s. Parts or complete. 218-585-8102 or 218-415-1427.

Bernzomatic Heater  
Models TX 900 and TX 900A Only.  
218-474-1837, Lv Mess.

### Our Ad Policy

Ads due the 10th of the month prior to publication.

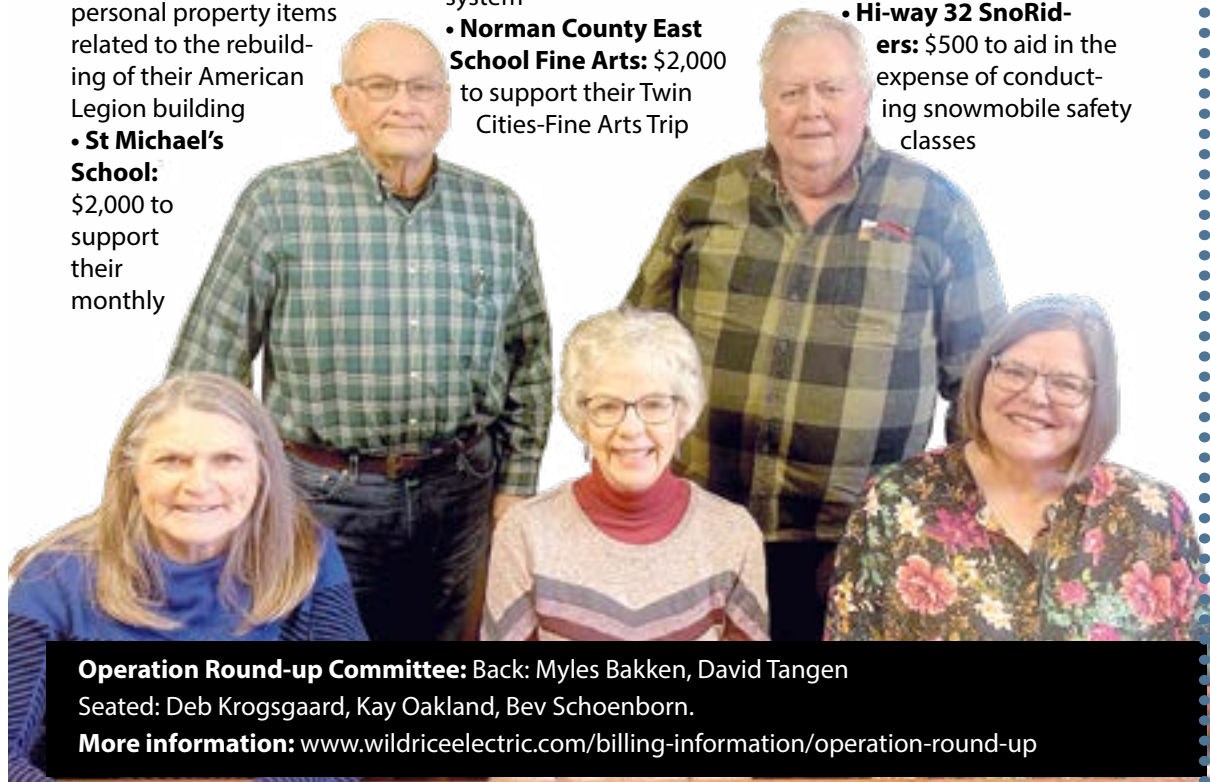
Email ads to . . .  
info@wildriceelectric.com

Mail ads to Wild Rice Electric  
P.O. Box 438  
Mahnomen, MN 56557

**Operation Round-up Committee:** Back: Myles Bakken, David Tangen

Seated: Deb Krogsgaard, Kay Oakland, Bev Schoenborn.

**More information:** [www.wildriceelectric.com/billing-information/operation-round-up](http://www.wildriceelectric.com/billing-information/operation-round-up)



# Voices for GRID RELIABILITY

America's electric grid is beginning to face significant reliability risks. As more baseload and dispatchable power plants are retired without adequate replacement, the margin for error is becoming razor thin.

Minnkota Power Cooperative, Wild Rice Electric Cooperative's wholesale power provider, maintains a diverse resource mix that includes coal, wind, and hydro power that contribute to a reliable grid. However, the Minnkota system is connected with other utilities across the central United States – from North Dakota and Minnesota down through Louisiana. Challenges in other parts of the country can contribute to reliability issues in our region.

Regulators, policymakers, utilities and others are voicing their concerns about transitioning too quickly toward intermittent resources – like wind and solar – without retaining the stability provided by coal, nuclear and natural gas power plants. Here's what some of the major entities responsible for reliability are saying.

## WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

"We are heading for potentially very dire consequences, potentially catastrophic consequences in the United States in terms of the reliability of our grid."

– MARK CHRISTIE, FERC COMMISSIONER, AT A HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE, ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON JUNE 13, 2023.

"The recent acceleration in the pace of fleet change is increasing risks to system reliability for MISO. Dispatchable generators that we need to ensure reliability are being removed from the system before new resources with the needed reliability attributes are being brought online."

– TODD RAMEY, MISO SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETS AND DIGITAL STRATEGY, AT A HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY, CLIMATE AND GRID SECURITY HEARING ON SEPT. 28, 2023.

"We are heading for potentially very dire consequences, potentially catastrophic consequences in the United States in terms of the reliability of our grid."

– MARK CHRISTIE, FERC COMMISSIONER, AT A HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE, ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON JUNE 13, 2023.

Despite all the regulatory uncertainty, our board and staff have committed to the view that we are going to live in a carbon-managed world and we'll need to develop technologies and strategies to help us navigate this challenge. We want to be part of the solution, but there needs to be an understanding that America's electric grid can't be completely transformed overnight."

– MAC MCLENNAN, MINNKOTA PRESIDENT AND CEO, IN AN OCT. 9, 2023, ARTICLE ON PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RULES.

## Do you Know?

### THE 7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

Cooperatives around the world generally operate according to the same core principles and values.

1. VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP
2. DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL
3. MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION
4. AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE
5. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION
6. COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES
7. CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

## ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at or below the state median income (\$62,822 for a family of four) to qualify for benefits. Applications must be received or postmarked by May 31, 2024.

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>, for more details and to access the application portal.

Contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance.

**Mahube Community Council**  
PO Box 76  
Mahnomon, MN 56557  
218-935-5022

**Mahube Community Council**  
1125 West River Rd  
Detroit Lakes, MN 56502  
218-847-1385

**White Earth Energy Assistance Program**  
3303 US Hwy 59/ PO Box 418  
White Earth, MN 56591  
218-473-2711 or 888-458-1385

**West Central Minnesota Communities Action, Inc.**  
715 11th St N Suite100  
Moorhead, MN 56560  
800-492-4805/ 218-685-4486

**Inter County Community Council**  
PO Box 189  
Oklee, MN 56742  
218-796-5144/ 888-778-4008

**Tri-Valley Opportunity Council**  
102 N Broadway/ PO Box 607  
Crookston, MN 56716  
218-281-5832/ 800-584-7020

Wild Rice Electric Cooperative exists because of you, and we are dedicated to the people and communities we serve. If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for either of these programs, please contact us immediately to work out a mutually agreeable payment plan.



PERIODICAL

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## Wild Rice Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Monday- Friday

**Telephone:** 800-244-5709 or to  
make a payment 855-949-5868

**Website:** wildriceelectric.com

**Email:** info@wildriceelectric.com

### Officers and Directors:

**Chair** ..... Jim Kaiser, District 3  
**Vice Chair** ..... Larry Sollie, District 1  
**Secretary** .. Mark Habedank, District 2  
**Treasurer** ..... Dave Hamre, District 1

**District 1:** Jeff Nornes

**District 2:** Greg LaVoy & Roger Winter

**District 3:** Randy Bjornson &  
Russ Okeson

**President & CEO** ..... Mike Wade

**ATTENTION CREDIT/DEBIT CARD AUTO  
PAY MEMBERS:** Have you re-entered your  
payment information with our new  
SmartHub payment system/IVR system?  
Failure to do so will result in no payment  
being posted to your account.

### HOW WILL YOU REGISTER FOR SMARTHUB?



Whether through the web or  
mobile app, you can register  
your account, for free at  
**wildriceelectric/smarthub.**

Make sure to have your Wild Rice Electric  
account number when registering



## Get Social with Us!

Are you on social media? We are! We utilize  
Facebook to share information about topics such  
as electrical safety, energy efficiency, cooperative  
events, and peak energy alerts. We also provide  
information when major outages occur.

*Wild Rice Electric  
Cooperative is committed  
to keeping our member's  
banking and personal  
information secure.*

As a security measure our  
member service represen-  
tatives **CANNOT ACCEPT  
PAYMENT** information  
**OVER THE PHONE**

If you wish to make a pay-  
ment or set up your ac-  
count for autopayment  
via telephone on our IVR  
system, call **1-855-949-5868**  
24 hours a day with a major  
credit/debit card or by  
providing your checking or  
saving account information.