

Red River Valley Cooperative Power Association

SPARKS

December 2022

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



SPARKS

Red River Valley Co-op Power is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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Jennifer Erickson, Graphic Artist

December 2022
Volume 66, No. 9

Halstad, Minnesota (USPS 509-300)

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Roger Krostue Fisher
Chairman
Marvis Thompson Perley
Vice Chairman
Paul Baukol Hendrum
Secretary-Treasurer
Bob Kinkade Ada
Curt Stubstad Sabin
Trevor Sorby Glyndon

Rich Whitcomb
Chief Executive Officer

Scheduled Board Meeting

Board meetings are held in Halstad at the cooperative office starting at 8:30 a.m. on the next-to-last Monday of each month.

**Outages:
800-788-7784**

On the cover: This mature buck stands at attention in tall grass near the Red River. Photo courtesy of Jane Borgen, Perley.



THE CEO'S REPORT No rate increase planned for 2023

by Rich Whitcomb, CEO

At its November meeting, Red River Valley Co-op Power's board of directors approved the 2023 budget with no planned rate increase to start the year.

However, with costs rising in basically all areas of expenses due to inflation and supply chain challenges, your cooperative will be watching closely whether rates need to be evaluated mid-year of 2023. Despite rising costs, staff managed expenses effectively in 2022. Barring anything unforeseen, margins will remain stable through the end of the year.

Plans are to continue investing in robust reliability. This includes targeted tree trimming, specific site projects, hardening sections of overhead power poles and replacing

underground cable that has reached the end of its useful life.

As a not-for-profit, we strive to maintain responsible margins adequate enough to cover lender requirements and operational standards.

Person and Mickelson retire/ Zurn and Hemberger take over

Nancy Person will retire in early January after a 25-year career mostly as Billing Supervisor. Roxann Mickelson will retire in early January after a 16-year career as Member Service Representative. Tina Zurn will be the new Billing Supervisor and Crystal Hemberger will be the new Member Service Representative.

A big thank you goes to Nancy and Roxann for their contributions and a warm welcome to Tina and Crystal.

Seasons Greetings
From all of us at Red River Valley Co-op Power

Our offices will be closed Friday at noon, Dec. 23, and all day Monday, Dec. 26, for the Christmas holiday.

We will also be closed Monday, Jan. 2, for the New Year's holiday.

If you experience a power outage on those days, you may reach the lineworkers on call by phoning dispatch at (800) 788-7784.

2023 Director Elections

2023 director elections

Red River Valley Co-op Power members in District 2 and 3 can now submit nominations to compete for a seat on the board of directors.

As a cooperative, Red River Valley Co-op Power is owned by its members. Members elect a board of directors to represent them at the cooperative. Two directors will be elected at the 2023 annual meeting on March 23.

Directors whose terms expire in 2023 are:

District 2 (three-year term): Paul Baukol

District 3 (three-year term): Trevor Sorby

How to run

To run for a director position, interested members in the above-mentioned districts (see map) must request to have the material mailed to them or pick up the packet at the Hendrum School (temporary office). Per the bylaws, any 15 or more members who reside in District 2 or 3 may nominate an eligible member for a director position in that specific district.

No member may be elected to a director position unless nominated in this manner. No write-in ballots will be accepted. The cooperative must receive the completed petitions and forms from the packet no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 17, 2023. Please see below for the section of the bylaws pertaining to nominations and qualifications. Please call with questions.

Director Districts

District 1 Townships

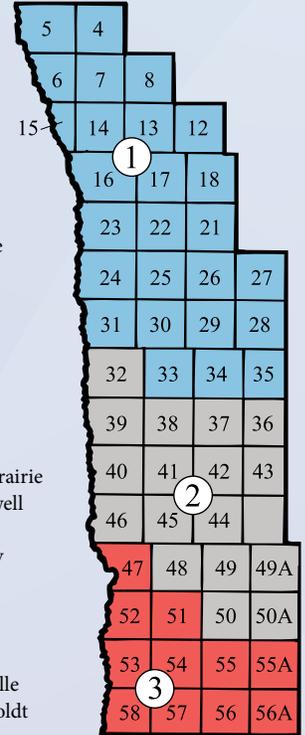
- 4 - Nesbit
- 5 - Huntsville & Rhinehart
- 6 - Bygland
- 7 - Fisher
- 8 - Lowell
- 12 - Fairfax
- 13 - Andover
- 14 - Roome
- 15 - Tynsid
- 16 - Vineland
- 17 - Hammond
- 18 - Russia
- 21 - Reis
- 22 - Scandia
- 23 - Hubbard
- 24 - Shelly
- 25 - Good Hope
- 26 - Lockhart
- 27 - Spring Creek
- 28 - Green Meadow
- 29 - Pleasant View
- 30 - Anthony
- 31 - Halstad
- 33 - Hegne
- 34 - McDonaldsville
- 35 - Lake Ida

District 2 Townships

- 32 - Hendrum
- 36 - Rockwell
- 37 - Winchester
- 38 - Mary
- 39 - Lee
- 40 - Georgetown
- 41 - Viding
- 42 - Felton
- 43 - Hagen
- 44 - Flowing
- 45 - Morken
- 46 - Kragnes
- 48 - Moland
- 49 - Spring Prairie
- 49A - Cromwell
- 50 - Riverton
- 50A - Hawley

District 3 Townships

- 47 - Oakport
- 51 - Glyndon
- 52 - Moorhead
- 53 - Kurtz
- 54 - Elmwood
- 55 - Elkton
- 55A - Skree
- 56 - Barnesville
- 56A - Humboldt
- 57 - Alliance
- 58 - Holy Cross



Petition for Nomination

The following members wish to nominate [insert name], for the three-year [insert "District 2"] or for the three-year [insert "District 3"] director position, and to place such name on the ballot for the March 23, 2023, election at the annual meeting of the Cooperative, in accordance with Article III, Section 4, of the bylaws.

NAME	ADDRESS	ACCOUNT NO.
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
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9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
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15.		
16.		
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18.		
19.		
20.		

The Cooperative must receive the completed petition no later than 4:30 p.m., February 17, 2023. At the annual meeting scheduled for March 23, 2023, elections will be held for a three-year term each for one director in District 2 and one director in District 3.

The directors whose terms expire in 2023 are as follows:

DISTRICT 2	DISTRICT 3
3-year term	3-year term
Paul Baukol	Trevor Sorby

Any 15 or more members who reside in District 2 or 3 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.

Red River Valley Cooperative Power Association Bylaws

ARTICLE III - DIRECTORS

Section 4. Nominations.

- (a) Any fifteen (15) or more members who reside in any one district may nominate an eligible member for a director position in that district. Such nomination shall be in writing and signed by said fifteen (15) members, or more, and delivered to the Secretary at least thirty (30) days before the members' meeting.
- (b) No member may be elected to a director position unless nominated in the manner provided by this section. No write-in ballots shall be accepted.
- (c) The members may, at any meeting at which a director or directors shall be removed, as heretofore provided, elect a successor or successors thereto without compliance with the provisions herein with respect to nominations.

continued on page 5

DECK THE HALLS *safely*

There's nothing like putting up lights and decorations to get you in the holiday spirit. It's something that many do each and every year without incident, yet the holidays are also one of the most hazardous times of the year when it comes to electrical fires and accidents.

Safe Electricity offer several tips as you deck the halls this season:

- When decorating outside, look up and around for power lines. Never throw lights or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- Keep ladders, equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from power lines.
- Match plugs with outlets. Do not force a three-pronged plug into a two-pronged outlet or extension cord.
- Outside, use only lights, cords, animated displays, and decorations rated for outdoor use. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use them. Ensure outdoor out-

lets or extension cords are equipped with Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GCFIs).

- Never string more strands of lights together than recommended by the manufacturer.
- Do not staple or nail through light strings or electrical cords. Use plastic or insulated hooks to hang lights.
- Do not attach cords to utility poles.

The outside of your home is not the only place where you need to be cautious of electrical dangers. Also be careful when placing and decorating trees inside your home. Place fresh-cut and artificial trees away from heat sources such as registers, fireplaces, and radiators; water fresh-cut trees frequently. Turn lights off before you go to sleep. Use a timer to help.

Safe Electricity wishes you and your family a safe and happy holiday season. For more information on holiday safety tips visit, [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).

(d) If a member is absent from any meeting, the member may vote by mail for the election of directors as provided in these Bylaws, or as may be permitted by law.

Failure to comply with any of the provisions of this section shall not affect in any manner whatsoever validity of any election of directors.

Section 2. Qualifications.

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

- (a) be a member in good standing receiving electric service;
- (b) have voting rights within the district from which the director is to be elected;
- (c) not be employed by, materially affiliated with, or have a material financial interest in, any individual or entity which either is:
 - (1) directly or substantially competing with the Cooperative; or
 - (2) selling goods and services in substantial quantity to the Cooperative; or
 - (3) 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;

- (d) not be an employee or not have been an employee of the Cooperative within the last three (3) years;
- (e) not be a close relative of an employee, or of a director, unless the close relative is a candidate for the director’s seat, where as found in these Bylaws “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;

- (f) be only one (1), and not more than one (1), 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 herein set forth;
- (g) if a member of the Cooperative is not a natural person, i.e. a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or similar, then the member may appoint or elect one (1) duly authorized natural person, residing within the external boundaries of the district from which (s)he is nominated, to be eligible for election as a director to the Board of Directors;
- (h) never have been convicted of a felony;
- (i) agree, upon election, to regularly attend all Board, regular and special members’ meetings; and
- (j) not become physically or mentally unable with reasonable accommodation to perform substantially all of the duties of Director, and the condition that creates such inability is reasonably expected to last six (6) months or more.

Exception. In regard to the restrictive provisions of this section that are based upon close relative relationships, no incumbent director shall lose eligibility to remain a director or to be re-elected a director if, during a director’s incumbency, a director becomes a first kindred relative of another incumbent director or of a Cooperative employee because of a marriage or an adoption to which the director was not a part.

Nothing contained in this section shall, or be construed to, affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the Board of Directors.

BE PREPARED FOR WINTER STORMS

1 Retain indoor heat as long as possible. Do not open exterior doors unless absolutely necessary.

2 If you see a downed power line after a storm, assume the line is energized and do not approach.

3 Having an emergency cold weather kit could make all the difference while crews are working to get your power back on.

4 When using an alternate heating source (like a fireplace or woodstove), make sure you are following the operating instructions.

5 To help prevent your pipes from freezing, keep the faucets slightly on to allow a drip.

SAVE MONEY AND ENERGY IN 2023

WITH ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATES!

Energy efficiency rebates for members remain in effect for 2023. Please see the chart for a sample of incentives.

SAMPLE 2023 ELECTRIC REBATES FOR MEMBERS

Equipment	Specifications	Rebates
Air-source heat pump	≥ 16 SEER	\$500/ton*
Ground-source heat pump	Energy Star-rated	\$500/ton*
Electric water heater	Min. 80-gallon capacity, must be on load management program	\$300-\$650 per unit
Off-peak electric heat (plenum, baseboard, hanging heater, etc.)	Must be resistance electric on off-peak program	\$25/kW*
Electric boiler, brick storage, slab storage	Must be on off-peak program	\$45/kW*
Electric vehicle (EV) charger	240V-rated Level 2 charger on load control	\$50/kW/limit \$750 per account

Every install must be new equipment and provide proof of purchase unless site verification is approved.

**These amounts include a rebate from Minnkota Power Cooperative, which has a capped rebate, so call for details.*

All incentives, criteria and guidelines for resident and business members can be found at rrvcoop.com or by calling **800-788-7784**.

All criteria are listed on the rebate form.

12 DAYS of Energy Efficiency

Red River Valley Co-op Power wants to spread a little energy efficiency cheer this holiday season. Here are 12 days of energy efficiency tips that will keep the cold out and the savings in!

1. Make sure your home is properly insulated

Having a properly insulated basement can save you up to 20% in energy costs.



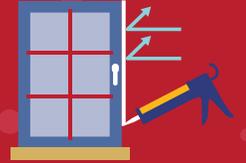
2. Turn down your thermostat



Keeping your home at the lowest temperature you are comfortable with can slow the loss of heat throughout your home.

3. Eliminate drafts near doors and windows

Using caulk and weatherstripping to seal off drafty windows and doors will help keep energy costs down this winter.



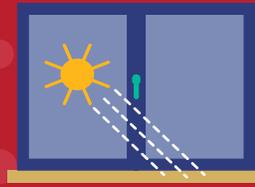
4. Lower your water heater temperature to 120 degrees



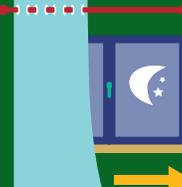
Every 10 degrees you lower your water temperature can save you around 5% in energy costs.

5. Let the sun in during the day

Free heat? Say yes!



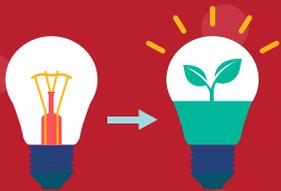
6. Close window shades at night



Don't let heat escape while you sleep! Close your window shades at night to keep the heat inside.

7. Switch to LED bulbs

LED holiday lights use up to 90% less energy than traditional lights and last for years.

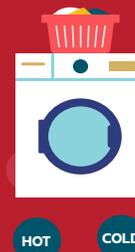


8. Turn off all lights when not in use

A simple way to save on your energy bill is just to turn the lights off when you leave a room.



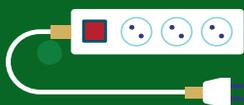
9. Wash clothes with warm or cold water



Washing your clothes with warm water can cut your energy use in half, and when using cold water you can save even more.

10. Use a power strip to turn electric appliances completely off

Eliminating this standby electricity loss from home appliances could add up to significant savings on your energy bill.



11. Use your ceiling fan to circulate airflow



When your ceiling fan runs in a clockwise direction, it allows warm air to be pushed down into the rest of your home.

12. Consider installing electric technology in your home

Air-source heat pumps, electric water heaters and so many other electric appliances can save you money each month. Check out your local co-op's rebates and incentive offers for installing electric technology today!





**RED RIVER VALLEY
CO-OP POWER**

Capital Credits – A Benefit of Membership

Your co-op returns almost \$250,000 back to members

Red River Valley Co-op Power is a member-owned, not-for-profit cooperative. In keeping with its principles, your cooperative is returning almost **\$245,727** back to members who purchased electricity from us in 1995.

Members who were part of the co-op in 1995 will see their capital credit amount as a credit on their December statement. RRVCP is also donating almost **\$42,000** in unclaimed capital credits to area schools. Since its inception, your cooperative has returned more than **\$9 million** worth of operating margins back to members.

Capital credits work like this:



Red River Valley Co-op Power is not-for-profit. As such, the cooperative only needs a margin to meet lender requirements and to operate.



Before being returned to members, margins are reinvested into the cooperative to help finance construction and maintain the distribution system.



Directors decide when to retire capital credits based on the cooperative's financial condition and other factors.

Please call **800-788-7784** if you have questions about your capital credit balance. Remember to provide us with your new address if you move outside the co-op service territory. For a list of unclaimed capital credits, go to **www.rrvcoop.com**, click on My Co-op and Capital Credits.