

Red River Valley Cooperative Power Association

# SPARKS

December 2019

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

*Merry  
Christmas*

FROM THE DIRECTORS  
AND  
EMPLOYEES OF  
RED RIVER VALLEY  
COOPERATIVE  
POWER ASSOCIATION



1977



1980

December always brought "Togetherness"  
time well-spent in front of a crackling fire,  
and popcorn shared with loved ones ... remember?



1963

**Live and Farm Better Electrically**

SAFER ... CLEANER ... MORE EFFICIENT

OVER ALL LOWER COSTS



C, NBCEA

# SPARKS

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

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[www.rrvcoop.com](http://www.rrvcoop.com)

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Rich Whitcomb, Editor  
Mary Merrill, Graphic Artist

December 2019  
Volume 63, No. 9

Halstad, Minnesota (USPS 509-300)

## OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Roger Krostue ..... Fisher  
Chairman  
Marvis Thompson ..... Perley  
Vice Chairman  
Trevor Sorby ..... Glyndon  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Bob Kinkade ..... Ada  
Sarah Tommerdahl ..... Hendrum  
Neil Wieser ..... Moorhead

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:** Holiday covers of *Sparks* from the past are featured on this month's front page. You'll notice the 1963 cover has a "MaryLou" inscription on the bottom. *Sparks* covers in the early '60s were sometimes drawn by local talent. In this case, Mary Lou Garness, a junior in high school at Halstad, was the artist for *Sparks* from at least December 1963 to December 1964. Please go to page 4 for one more stroll down memory lane with recipes collected from December *Sparks*' issues through the years.



Rich Whitcomb  
CEO

## THE CEO'S REPORT

# Capital credits returned to members

At its November board meeting your Board of Directors authorized returning about \$228,000 worth of margins (called capital credits) to members who purchased electricity in 1992.

Members receiving capital credits will see their credit on their December statement. Since its inception, your cooperative has returned about \$8 million back to members. Capital credits are operating margins left over after all expenses have been paid for at year-end. Red River Valley Co-op Power is not-for-profit and therefore only needs enough margins to meet lender requirements and operate. Before margins are returned, they are reinvested to help finance construction and maintain the distribution system.

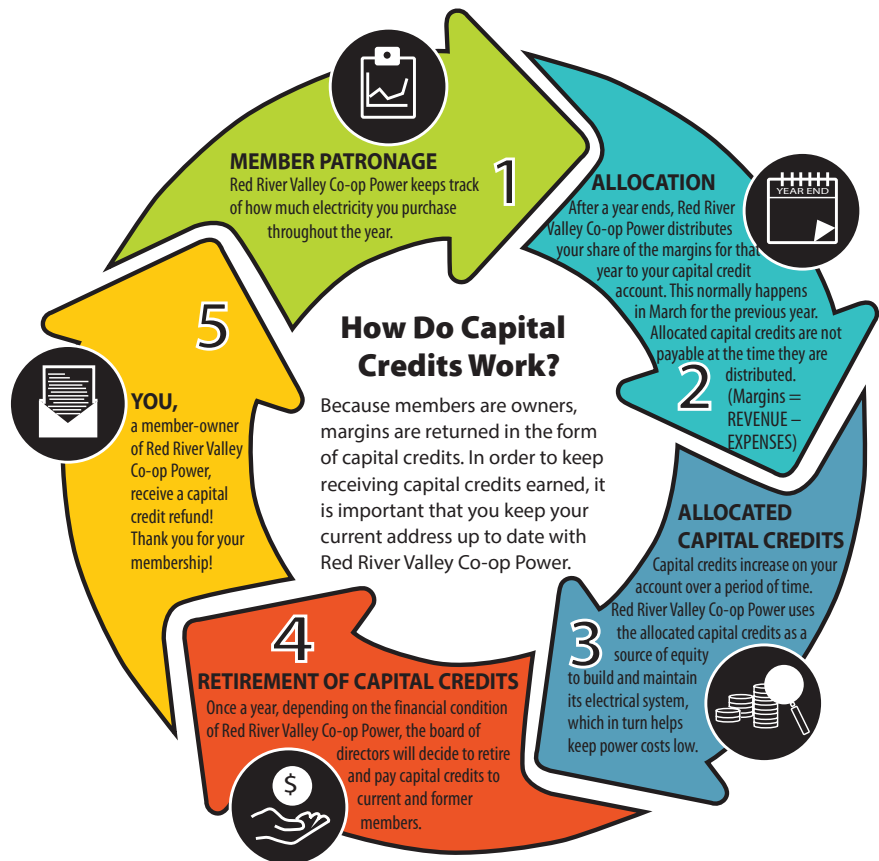
Directors decide when to retire capital credits based on the cooperative's financial condition and other factors. All members receive their share of yearly margins once those are retired in the future. Please call 800-788-7784 if

you have questions about your capital credit balance or how margins are retired. Remember to provide us with your new address if you move outside the co-op service territory.

## Year-end update

It appears your co-op will end the year with about 40 new services added in 2019; mostly housing and miscellaneous agricultural-related services like field drain tile pumps. Growth is good because it helps spread out expenses. The Board meets this month to finalize the budget. The wildcard in terms of kWh sales remains the weather and how much the difficult fall affected agricultural-related sales. Regardless, it appears your co-op will meet its operational requirements this year, and we have already turned our eyes toward making 2020 a successful year in terms of reliability, service and value.

I hope you and your family find peace this Christmas and holiday season.



# 2020 Director Elections

## 2020 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 2020 annual meeting March 19 at the Halstad Legion Recreation Center. Directors whose terms expire in 2020 are:

*District 2 (three-year term): Sarah Tommerdahl*

*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 pick up a petition form and director packet at the office in Halstad or request to have the material mailed to them. Per the Bylaws, any 15 or more members who reside in Districts 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 Tuesday, February 18, 2020. Please see below for the section of the bylaws pertaining to nominations and qualifications.

## Director Districts

### District 1 Townships

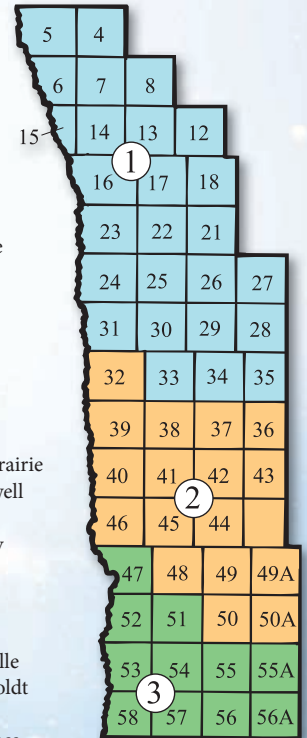
- 4 - Nesbit
- 5 - Huntsville
- 6 - Bygland
- 7 - Fisher
- 8 - Lowell
- 12 - Fairfax
- 13 - Andover
- 14 - Roome
- 15 - Tynsid
- 16 - Vineland
- 17 - Hammond
- 18 - Russia
- 21 - Reis
- 22 - Scandia
- 23 - Hubbard & Rhinehart
- 24 - Shelly
- 25 - Good Hope
- 26 - Lockhart
- 27 - Spring Creek
- 28 - Green 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 19, 2020, 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.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			

The Cooperative must receive the completed petition no later than 4:30 p.m., February 18, 2020. At the annual meeting scheduled for March 19, 2020, 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 2020 are as follows:

DISTRICT 2	DISTRICT 3
3-year term	3-year term
Sarah Tommerdahl	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*



# A MERRY STROLL DOWN MEMORY LANE

For many years, the recipe section of *Sparks* was one of the most popular features in the monthly member newsletter/magazine. The recipe feature started in 1959 and lasted until 1991. In that time, members submitted numerous recipes. Below are just a few of the recipes that appeared throughout the years with the year and name of the member submitting them, if known. All these recipes are from a November or December issue.

## Hot Spiced Cranberry Punch 1969

9 cups cranberry juice  
9 cups unsweetened pineapple juice  
4 cups water  
1 cup brown sugar  
4 cinnamon sticks, broken  
4 tsp. whole cloves

Combine fruit juices, water and brown sugar in a 30-cup percolator. Place cinnamon pieces and cloves in basket. Allow punch to perk the entire cycle. Percolator will keep punch always piping hot. Serve with a small pat of butter in each cup. Yields 30 cups.

## Christmas Icebox Cookies 1970

1 cup butter  
½ cup brown sugar  
¼ cup honey  
3 ½ to 4 cups sifted flour  
1 tsp. baking powder  
½ tsp. salt  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
½ tsp. nutmeg  
½ tsp. mace  
½ cup sour cream  
1 cup chopped nuts  
1 cup currants  
1 cup white raisins  
½ cup diced candied pineapple  
½ cup diced candied red cherries  
½ cup diced candied green cherries

Cream butter until light, add sugar and honey. Beat for an additional 10 minutes. Sift dry ingredients together and add to the butter mixture alternately with sour cream. Fold in floured nuts and fruit and form into rolls about 1½ inches in diameter. Wrap in aluminum foil and store in freezing compartment overnight. Slice in ¼-inch slices. Bake in 350 degree oven for 12-15 minutes. Makes 3 dozen cookies.

## Kringle (Norwegian Sweet Rolls) 1980

Mix: 1 T. anise seed and 2 cups milk scald and cook to lukewarm.  
Mix: ½ cup sugar, ½ cup shortening and 1 tsp. salt.

Dissolve: 1 package dry yeast in ¼ cup warm water. Combine all ingredients. Add flour to make soft sponge. Let rise. Add ½ cup sugar and flour to make firmer dough. Let rise, knead and let rise again. Pinch off a little dough, roll and shape in form of a pretzel. Place on greased cookie sheets. Let rise again. Bake at 375 degrees for 15-20 minutes. These improve with age if kept in a cool place, well covered.

## Nordland Lefse 1977, Marlys Hicks

2 cups scalded milk  
½ cup lard  
1 tablespoon salt  
4 cups flour

Combine all but 2 cups flour. Mix over low heat. Remove and use rest of flour in rolling on floured board.

This can be kept a couple of days wrapped in plastic and refrigerated before frying. Marlys says her children help with this and that it is very easy to handle.

## Easy Lefse 1977, Ardyce

5 cups water  
2 T. sugar  
2 cups cold milk  
1 pound potato flakes  
¼ pound shortening  
2 t. salt  
2 cups flour

Bring to a boil; water, salt, sugar and shortening. Remove from heat and add cold milk. Pour in potato buds and stir well. When cold add 2 cups flour. Roll this and bake. Best if potato mixture is mixed night before and add flour in morning.

## Wild Rice Casserole 1986

4 strips bacon (cut up)  
½ cup onion (chopped)  
¼ cup green pepper (chopped)  
½ pound fresh mushrooms (chopped)  
2 tbsp. butter (melted)  
1 can cream of mushroom soup  
½ cup dry white wine  
½ cup ripe olives (chopped)  
1 tsp celery salt  
3 cups cooked wild rice  
2 cups cooked white rice

Fry bacon until crisp. Remove from skillet. Saute onion, green pepper and mushrooms in drippings for five minutes. Combine all ingredients and put in a casserole. If mixture seems dry, add a little water. Cover and bake at 325 degrees for one hour.

## Wild Duck 1961

1 duck  
Soda water  
Favorite dressing mixture  
2 onions

Method: parboil in soda water, 1 tsp. to one quart water; stuff with dressing; cut lots of onion over dressing after placing in duck. Bake in slow oven for two hours.

Stuffing: 4 cups stale bread crumbs  
2 chopped apples  
1 cup raisins  
Salt  
Pepper

A few pieces of butter and sage. Mix all ingredients and add enough moisture for mixture to stay together.

- (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 individ-

ual 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.

# Seasons Greetings

*from all of us at Red River Valley Co-op Power*

**Our office will be closed Tuesday at noon, Dec. 24, & all day Wednesday, Dec. 25, for Christmas.  
We will also be closed Wednesday, Jan. 1, for the New Year’s holiday.**

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

# Minnesota receives \$105 million in federal funds for heating assistance

## MINNESOTANS HAVING DIFFICULTY PAYING THEIR ENERGY BILLS ENCOURAGED TO APPLY FOR ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Minnesota Department of Commerce announced that the state's Energy Assistance Program is receiving more than \$105 million (\$105,716,913) in federal funding to help Minnesotans pay their heating bills this winter. This represents 90% of the expected total funding. The remaining 10% is expected to be allocated later in the year.

The funds from the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) reduce home heating costs by making payments directly to utility companies and heating fuel vendors on behalf of eligible Minnesota homeowners and renters.

Minnesotans who have difficulty paying their heating bills are encouraged to apply for energy assistance, especially households with seniors, small children, people with disabilities and veterans.

Energy assistance is available for homeowners and renters who earn less than 50 percent of the state's median income (\$52,014 for a family of four). Last year the program served nearly 126,000 Minnesota households (with approximately 315,000 household members), with an average grant of approximately \$545. Some households also received help to address no-heat crisis situations or repair broken heating systems.

### How to apply for heating assistance

There is still plenty of time for new applicants and those who qualified last year to reapply, but funding is limited and administered on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications will be accepted until June 1, 2020, or until funds run out.

Minnesotans should submit an ap-

plication to the local service provider in their area. To get more information about the program and contact your local service provider, call 800-657-3710 or visit the Energy Assistance Program section of the Department of Commerce website ([mn.gov/commerce/eap.jsp](http://mn.gov/commerce/eap.jsp)). Or call Red River Valley Co-op Power at 218-456-2139 for more information.

Minnesotans who qualify for energy assistance may also be eligible for the Weatherization Assistance Program, a companion program that uses the same application as energy assistance. The weatherization program helps permanently reduce energy bills for low income Minnesotans by providing free energy-saving upgrades to ensure that their homes are warm, healthy and safe. Other forms of assistance may also be available through county social service programs, community-based organizations and nonprofit agencies.

### Cold Weather Rule protection

In addition to applying for heating assistance, low-income Minnesotans are encouraged to contact their utility and seek protection under the state's Cold Weather Rule.

The Cold Weather Rule is in effect from October 15 to April 15 and protects residential utility customers from having their heat shut off if they contact their utility to establish and maintain a monthly payment plan. Please note that households can still be shut off in winter if details of the plan are not followed.

Minnesotans who use delivered fuels such as propane, fuel oil or wood to heat their homes are not covered by the Cold Weather Rule, but they may get help from the Energy Assistance Program.

## Deadline for 2019 rebate submissions is December 23



Red River Valley Co-op Power members planning to take advantage of energy-efficiency rebates should keep in mind that the current set of rebate offerings ends this year. Any rebates for this year must be in the office by Dec. 23 to be eligible for this year's rebates.

Getting your rebates in by that date is very important for members wishing for a rebate on any lighting or Energy-Star clothes washer or dryer because rebates for those items have been eliminated or greatly reduced in 2020. Again, please get all your rebates to us prior to Dec. 23. Your cooperative does plan to offer energy rebates in 2020. The new list of rebates and amounts for 2020 will be approved this month for release in early January 2020. If you have any questions, please call 218-456-2139 or email at [info@rrvcoop.com](mailto:info@rrvcoop.com). The current list of rebates is available online at [rrvcoop.com](http://rrvcoop.com).

# Use your space heater safely

If you use plug-in electric space heaters, please keep safety in mind since space heaters are responsible for 32 percent of house fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association. If you plan to use a space heater in your home this winter, review these tips to keep you, your family and your property safe.



**Materials** – What are the components of your space heater made of? Parts like metal grating can be hot to the touch and may burn anyone who gets too close. Make sure you purchase a heater that is cool to the touch and has guards over the coils just in case little fingers get too close.

**Placement** – While it can be tempting to place a small heater on a shelf so it is not in the way of pets and children, it is safest to leave the heater on a level floor on a nonflammable surface. Keeping the space heater on the floor can keep it from falling over, preventing fire hazards. Also, remember that space heaters and bathrooms are not a good combination, unless the heater is designed for bathroom use. Moisture can damage the heater.

The most important rule about space heater placement is the 3-foot rule. Whether you are using the heater in the bedroom, living room or kitchen, space heaters should always be kept 3 feet away from flammable materials and out of the way of children and pets.

**Special features** – Does your space heater have an auto shut-off function if tipped over? Auto shutoff can be a lifesaver. If you currently own a space heater without auto shutoff, consider purchasing a heater with this important safety feature.

**Cords** – You should never use an extension cord when plugging in a space heater as it can cause overheating. The space heater should be plugged directly into a wall outlet, and it should be the only thing plugged into the outlet. Also make sure cords aren't in a high-traffic area so they are not a tripping hazard.

**Use** – Never leave a heater unattended while in use. If you are leaving your home or going to bed, make sure to unplug the heater.

An infographic with a blue and white snowflake background. In the center is a cartoon illustration of a person in a green hat driving a blue car through snow, with 'RRRR' written in red above the car. Surrounding the central image are ten white circular callouts, each containing a list of items for a winter emergency kit. Below the central image is the text 'Don't get stuck in the cold' and 'Be prepared with a winter emergency kit.'

**WATER, SNACKS**

**JUMPER CABLES**

**TOW ROPE**

**FLARES**

**BLANKET, WARM CLOTHING**

**SHOVEL, ICE SCRAPER**

**CELL PHONE CHARGER**

**FLASHLIGHT**

**BAG OF SAND FOR TRACTION**

**FIRST AID KIT**

**Don't get stuck in the cold**  
Be prepared with a winter emergency kit.



**RED RIVER VALLEY  
CO-OP POWER**

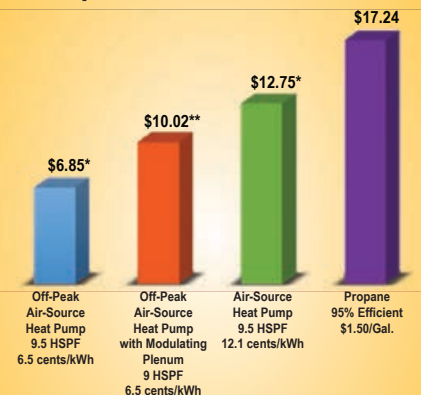
# Snuggle Up to Savings

*with an  
Air-Source  
Heat Pump*



An air-source heat pump and/or a modulating plenum heater is a great way to achieve comfort and super efficiency year-round. Heat pumps make perfect cents, especially when coupled with up to \$500 per ton in rebates from Red River Valley Co-op Power!

**Price difference in heating fuels  
per million Btus of heat**



\* Outside temperatures fluctuate, affecting the heat pump's efficiency. Efficiency and price per million Btus is estimated at 47 degrees F. Need additional heat like plenum heater in winter.  
\*\* Heat pump with modulating plenum assumes a coefficient of performance of 1.9 at 10 degrees F using information provided and reviewed by Electro Industries, Monticello, Minn.

For information on great rebates of up to \$500 per ton for heat pumps and \$30 per kW for off-peak resistance heat, please call Member Services at 218-456-2139.



**RED RIVER VALLEY  
CO-OP POWER**