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VOLTS & VIEWS

 **Roseau Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

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THE LINEWORKERS OF THE LAKE

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Ronald Ditsch – 651-368-2195

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Inspector list is subject to change at any time.

The State of Minnesota has high wiring standards, which are in the best interest of you and your family or business. Improper wiring can damage your home, your property and equipment, and injure or kill the people you love. Currently, the state does allow homeowners to do their own residential wiring; however, it is critical that the current electrical code is followed. 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.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT OFF-PEAK HEATING



**Want to learn more?
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There are many off-peak heating technology options to choose from



Off-peak heating helps keep the regional grid reliable in the winter



You receive a reduced electric rate when you enroll in off-peak heating



You can receive hundreds of dollars in co-op rebates on new off-peak equipment



Off-peak heating allows the co-op to keep electricity affordable

REC lineworkers complete the barge unloading process on Oak Island.

THE LINEWORKERS OF THE LAKE



Challenges of waterlocked Roseau Electric Cooperative territory overcome with grit, gratitude

By **Kaylee Cusack**, *Minnkota Power Cooperative* /// Photography **Michael Hoeft**, *Minnkota Power Cooperative*

When in Minnesota's Northwest Angle, visitors typically have two options. Go to Canada, or go fishing.

See, the Angle (lovingly called so by the locals) is the reason the state outline of Minnesota sports a small cowlick on top, a nubbin of American land that boasts world-class walleye and the northernmost point of the contiguous United States. You can only get there by grabbing a passport and driving 40 miles through Manitoba, Canada, or you can hope the winter has enough bite to allow for an ice road across the Lake of the Woods.

Jedd VonEnde has traveled to the Angle both ways. But as a veteran lineworker for Roseau Electric Cooperative (REC), his visits often require transportation beyond a utility truck, snowmobile or even a boat.

The man needs a barge. A big one.

"We always have projects up here, like replacements and fix-ups and new services as people are building," VonEnde said as he stood near the shore of Oak Island, one of the several Lake of the Woods islands served by REC.

Earlier that morning, he and his four-man crew had filled their 44-foot steel barge – named The Evenson – with the conduit, transformers and heavy machinery needed to work on the island, launching seven miles away from the Angle mainland. The five lineworkers would be among multiple REC crews spending their summer repairing and replacing flood-damaged transformers, junction boxes and underground cable, hopping from one island to another, and another, and another.

"The barge is amazing compared to what we used to have," VonEnde said, referring to a 30-foot pontoon the co-op used prior to 2005. "I took the maiden voyage, from Warroad to here."

The Evenson was custom-built by Jerry Solom, a Wannaska, Minn., welder with a shipbuilding hobby who happened to be the brother of an REC employee. Other co-op crew members, including VonEnde, assisted with welding and construction. Together, they ensured the barge would meet all of their Northwest Angle needs, like maintaining nearly 89 miles of underwater primary wire and holding freight of more than 40,000 pounds; bucket trucks aren't light.

The machine was christened The Evenson in memory of longtime lineworker Bob Evenson, who was taken by cancer in 1999.

"He had worked at Roseau Electric for his entire career, and he worked up in the Angle a lot," said REC Member Services Director Jeremy Lindemann, who has also long served the Angle as an REC electrician. "He was one of the first linemen who brought power up to the Angle."



An aerial view of the Northwest Angle shows vast lake waters surrounding several islands and land points.



Reliability after high waters

Lindemann docked his boat at Walsh’s Bay Store Camp, near the Oak Island worksite of the REC line crew. Before his boots even hit the shore, he was greeted as an old friend by camp owner Frank Walsh. Moments later, he ran into Frank’s wife, Laura.

“So, what are you guys doing out here?” she asked, gesturing with curiosity to the hard hat-clad men staging work equipment in the resort’s backyard.

“It will make your power more reliable,” Lindemann assured her.

The summer of 2022 brought destructive flooding to the islands of the Angle, with the lake rising 6-8 feet higher than normal. Most docks were underwater, if they didn’t already float away. Many of REC’s transformers and junction boxes are along the shore, so they too were underwater. Wind and erosion subsequently exposed much of the REC electric cable that rises from the lakebed up onto the islands. Since the equipment was energized during this time, it suffered electrolysis from the minerals in the water.

“Once the water goes away, your transformers will rust out in a year. Because of all that, you have to

replace all of these transformers and junction boxes,” Lindemann explained. “A lot of those are being relocated, so at that time it makes sense to also refeed a lot of that, which is what they are doing on Oak Island.”

Roseau Electric was approved for funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to replace 27 pad-mounted transformers, 13 single-phase junction boxes and nearly 10 miles of underground cable, a project that crews plan to complete before the cold season. “We’re going island to island. So we have another two weeks on Oak Island here, and then we’ll have American Point, and then we’ll have some crossings from island to island,” VonEnde said, adding that five separate islands will receive a co-ops visit.



The Roseau line crew delivers equipment to an island worksite by barge. Pictured left to right: Dillion Thompson, Justin Olson, Jedd VonEnde and Connor Eidsmoe.

REC lineworker Devyn Brandt steers The Evenson.

On that day in June, VonEnde took his seat behind the controls of a large directional boring machine as lineworker Devyn Brandt walked far ahead, using a handheld locat-

ing device to precisely guide the drill head around obstructions to a transformer nearly 100 yards away. Once the drill made it to the designated dig-out by a transformer, the crew used the underground path to feed new, more efficient primary cable.

As the work turned to the wooded, rockier core of the island (rocks deposited by the glacier that formed the Angle islands eons ago), the boring machine was swapped for a trenching plow. This method allows for faster underground line placement and the ability to call in a digging machine when bounties of boulders are unavoidable.

"There are always challenges up here, but the challenges are fun," VonEnde said.

"Now when you're working on the beach, stringing wire across the water – that's the most relaxing," lineworker Brandt added, in placid retrospection of his years working the Angle.

Mutual energy

On the other side of the island, Chi Chi Lundsten has co-owned the Sportsman's Oak Island Lodge for 20 years. She worked there even before that. She's long witnessed the service provided by REC and often plays the role of "Angle electricity educator" to first-time resort visitors.

"I get some guests who ask, 'Are you running on a generator?' and I say, 'Nope! We have our local REC,'" she laughed. "And then they ask, 'How?' So I tell them – cable underwater, laid back in the '70s."

In 1973, REC took on the gargantuan task of electrifying the Angle. At that time, they weren't

equipped with barges, directional boring machines or anything close to the technology available to co-ops today.

"A lot of those linemen are retired now, but it used to be just one big celebration when they would bring power somewhere," Lindemann said. "People would invite them in and they'd have a big party. It was crazy. They were just so thankful."

The locals' appreciation for reliable electricity continues today. When REC crews encounter challenges, the Angle's residents and business owners step in to assist. Two years ago, on the day before Thanksgiving, Lundsten lost power at the resort during wicked weather. REC was unable to get to Oak Island that day because of the conditions. But on Thanksgiving, they made it to the Angle mainland. The lake was freezing over and rough, so they called in some help from an island neighbor.

"Frank [Walsh] went and got them on his airboat, and they came over

and got my power back," Lundsten said. "I was teasing them. I said, 'So are they saving dinner for you at home?'"

The give and take of service and appreciation is ever-present. In the first couple of weeks of the summer, a resident cooked the line crew a lunch of fresh walleye, potatoes and onions as they replaced line on his property. Other locals have offered spare tools if the crew is in an unexpected pinch – they understand their remoteness precludes a quick jaunt back to the shop.

Roseau Electric Cooperative lineworkers energize the Angle. But the Angle energizes them right back.

"A guy told us the other night, 'How the hell we even have power on an island is something,'" VonEnde recalled, his tone that of humility. "He said, 'If it ever goes out, we should be happy it was even here to start with.'"



Teamwork comes into play when threading hundreds of feet of cable underground.



REC's Jedd VonEnde finishes up the precision scoop work on Oak Island.

COLD WEATHER RULE

In accordance with Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule (216B.097), electric service cannot be disconnected for nonpayment between Oct. 1 and April 30 if electricity is the primary heat source and all of the following statements apply:

- Your household income is at or below 50% of the state median household income. Income may be verified on forms provided by Roseau Electric Cooperative or by the local energy assistance provider (see graphic).
- You enter into and make reasonable and timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
- You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills from Roseau Electric Cooperative.

Please note that the Cold Weather Rule does not completely stop winter disconnects.

Before disconnecting electric service to residential members between Oct. 1 and April 30, Roseau Electric Cooperative must provide:

- A 30-day mailed notice or 15-day hand delivered notice
- A statement of members' rights and responsibilities
- A list of local energy assistance providers
- Forms to request Cold Weather Rule protection
- A statement explaining available payment plans and other options to continue service.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

This program is federally funded and can help low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at 50% of the state median income to qualify for benefits.

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply visit the MN Dept. of Commerce Energy Assistance website at <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/> for more details and to access the application portal. Or simply contact your county's EAP service provider.

Roseau 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.

LOCAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

Northwest Community Action

PO Box 67
Badger, MN 56714-0067
(218) 528-3258 or 800-568-5329
nwcaa.org

Bi-County Cap, Inc.

6603 Bemidji Ave. N
Bemidji, MN 56601-8669
(218) 751-4631

NOTICE TO COGENERATORS

In compliance with Roseau Electric Cooperative, Inc., adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, Roseau Electric Cooperative, Inc., is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers who satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. Roseau Electric Cooperative, Inc., is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the Roseau Electric Cooperative, Inc. board. Interested members should contact Roseau Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 100, Roseau, MN 56751 or call 218-463-1543.



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OPERATING STATISTICS

	Monthly		Year to Date	
	July 2022	July 2023	July 2022	July 2023
Members	6,641	6,677	6,641	6,677
kWh purchased	9,866,338	9,593,625	94,557,051	90,654,392
% change		-2.76%		-4.13%
Revenue	1,364,256	1,360,709	11,332,217	11,204,293
Cost of power	813,539	810,771	6,901,492	6,750,747
Other expenses	638,854	533,934	3,961,678	3,910,150
Operating margins	(88,137)	16,004	469,047	543,396
Non-operating margins	13,584	1,400	41,060	47,696
Patronage dividends	-	13,890	169,747	26,767
Total margins	(74,553)	31,294	679,854	617,859

member connection

ENERGY TIP

Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a tune-up for your heating system? Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment. Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills.

Source: energy.gov

DATES TO REMEMBER

September 21
Electric bill is due

October 17
Co-op Day



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Monday – Friday
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
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Toll-Free: 1-888-847-8840
(main outage call center)

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PAY BY PHONE

1-877-999-3412

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

WEBSITE

roseauelectric.coop



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@RoseauElectricCooperativeInc

CO-OP APPRECIATION DAY

Tuesday, October 17



ROSEAU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Serving lunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Please join us for turkey on a bun, beans, chips & cookies.

Sign up for prizes and enjoy visiting with your co-op friends and neighbors!