



## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

## NEW! Secure Pay Phone Number: 1-855-941-3549

REA's Secure Pay system (or the automatic pay-by-phone system) has a new phone number! As of June 19th, it is **1-855-941-3549**.

**The old phone number was 1-855-385-9907. Please delete that number, as it will no longer work.**

*This only affects our Secure Pay. Our office phone numbers will remain the same.*

# NEWSLINE

July 2024

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## REA Mourns the Loss of a Friend and a Director **AUDREY HJELLE**

We are sad to announce that Audrey Hjelle, of Barrett, died on June 13, 2024, after a courageous battle with cancer.

“Audrey was smart, witty, funny, and a good friend. She was an all-around awesome lady!” said REA Board President Andy Anderson. “Audrey paved the way for women on boards, boards traditionally consisting of only men.”

Audrey served on the REA Board of Directors since 1996. “Audrey’s commitment and dedication to REA included serving as president, vice president, and secretary and representing REA on the Great River Energy Board of Directors, said REA CEO Al Haman. “ Her get things done attitude was always welcome in the board room and you never had to wonder about Audrey’s position on a topic!”

“If there is a silver lining, Audrey’s hard work and good decision-making have laid the foundation and paved the way for REA to provide electricity for our members for years to come. Audrey’s leadership and friendship will be missed,” said Anderson. “Until we meet again, RIP, my friend!”



**Audrey Hjelle**

**“Those we love don’t go away.**

**They walk beside us every day.**

**Unseen, unheard, but always near.**

**Still loved, still missed and very dear.”**

- Alex MacLean

### **Audrey has lived out the 7 Cooperative Principles in her own special way:**

- 1. Voluntary & Open Membership** - Audrey lived her life always willing to volunteer wherever she was called to serve, often taking a leadership role.
- 2. Democratic Member Control** - Audrey represented the members of her district and the entire co-op membership of REA for 28 years, setting policies and making decisions, always keeping the best interest of the members and the co-op at the forefront.
- 3. Members’ Economic Participation** - Audrey was a member of REA for 60 years, helping support the cooperative by paying their monthly electric bills and participating in a variety of co-op programs to conserve energy, which helps save the co-op money too.
- 4. Autonomy and Independence** - Audrey was a huge advocate for conserving the independence and autonomy of the rural lifestyle and way of life.
- 5. Education, Training, and Information** - Audrey made it a priority to be an educated board member who embraces technology as a useful tool, especially during Covid and while undergoing cancer treatments.
- 6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives** - Audrey was part of the team that brought two cooperatives together, Runestone Electric Association and Stearns Electric Association, by sharing a CEO for 15 years.
- 7. Concern for Community** - Audrey was a huge community supporter of her church, school and other civic organizations in her hometown, Barrett and Grant County.



**Al Haman**  
CEO

## A Note from the CEO

### Reasons we might knock on your door

Two notifications popped up on my phone – “There is motion at your front door” and “Home has a new photo” - telling me that something was captured on security cameras at our front door and end of the driveway. It was about noon, so I

acknowledged the notifications and assumed it was our mail carrier dropping off a delivery. Later, when I had a free moment, I checked out the video and discovered we had a stranger stop by, but I couldn’t tell what they were doing from the video. The doorbell caught a clear video of the person, and the driveway camera took a great picture of the vehicle. Has this happened to you?

As you can imagine, REA employees and our contractors go in and out of driveways many times each day. In recent years, we’ve noticed an increase in calls from members who have security cameras installed around their property that have been triggered by REA vehicles or employees. In most cases, it is difficult for office staff to know exactly where each field employee is at any given moment and what they are working on. We have automated vehicle locating installed, so there’s a general idea of those locations. But we don’t implement a system to track employees and for what purpose they might be in your driveway or at your front door.

This makes it difficult for someone in the office who has answered your phone call to explain why an REA vehicle was caught on your camera.

These are the most common reasons why we might be at your property.

**Unexpected outage for maintenance, repair, or replacement of equipment** – Maintenance on our system is never-ending. Although we try to do as much work as we can without interrupting your power, many tasks require that powerlines be de-energized to keep our lineworkers safe.

**Meter change out** — Our billing department runs a report daily identifying meters that are not reporting. Quite often, this results in a visit to the location to

change the meter. As crazy as it sounds, this summer, we’ve had an unusual number of meters needing to be replaced due to ants shorting out the meter. Perhaps the damp weather has driven the insects from their nests in search of a dry new home in a meter socket.

**Replacement of Demand Response Units and Aquanta units**—We’re in the process of replacing load control devices across our service territory. Since the devices are mounted on the home, access to the electric panel inside the house is important to ensure the work can be completed safely by our electricians pictured below. When access is not possible, accounts may experience a brief outage to complete the work. The project was 30% complete by the end of May.

If you are concerned by a photo taken by your doorbell camera, and you suspect it may have been someone from REA, feel free to email [rea@runestoneelectric.com](mailto:rea@runestoneelectric.com) with the picture or screenshot, and we’ll check to see if it may have been one of our employees.

## Meet Our Electricians



**Barry, REA Electrician**



**Cody, STAR Energy Electrician**



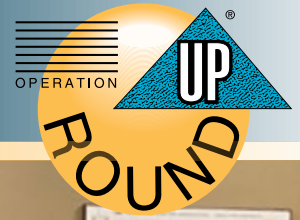
**Josh, REA Electrician**

## REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - May 2024

- » Reviewed the Financial Report for April 2024. Sales are lagging behind the budget and down 9% from last year at this time. We are currently lower than budget in most expense categories, although that doesn’t show in the margin due to the tree clearing contract being ahead of budget. A mild spring has allowed crews to do work on capital projects earlier in the year.
- » Approved Lyle and Sue Westrom, Elbow Lake, to represent District 3 on the Member Advisory Council.
- » CEO Haman reviewed discussed recent safety training, including pole top and bucket truck rescues, mayday drills, and an emergency restoration plan tabletop exercise.
- » Energy Services & Business Development Manager Ryan Rooney provided an electric vehicle update highlighting public chargers and REA member charging.
- » Agreed to pursue a resolution for the regular July board meeting, adding a retainer of \$300 per month while maintaining per diems in Board Policy BD-06 Director’s Compensation and Expenses. The goal is to present the proposal to the Member Advisory Council in August, with a vote taken at the November Council meeting.
- » **The regular July Board Meeting will be Tuesday, July 30, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.**

# REA Members Support Their Communities

## Operation Round Up Distributes \$16,100 in June!



Representing some of the organizations receiving Operation Round Up® grants in June, from back row l to r – Suzanne Vold, Minnewaska Post Prom; Rich Duncan and David Lundy, Operation Round Up Trust Board Members; Alec Swanson and Elliot Draz, Shield 616 MN Ride; Roger Thalman, Prairie Woodcarvers; Josh Whiting Shield 616 MN Ride; Nathan Eisel, Holmes City First Responders; Nicole Fernholz, Hello Neighbor; Heather Smith-Ahrens, Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County; and Amy Scholsser, Piece Makers Quilt Group. Middle row l to r – Ardie Piper, Sonya Anderson and Tudor Ledum, Let's Go Fishing – Alex Area Lakes; Joren and Hans Dahl, Alexandria Nordic Ski Club; Joan Helgeson and Bonnie Borgurd, Our Saviors Ten Mile Lake Quilters; Kim Hanson, West Moe Church Community Barn Dance; Joy Wrolson, Trysil Bethesda Lutheran Cemetery Association; Carol Anderson, Bethel Cemetery Association; Alma Contreras, Conexiones; Debbie Lacey, Hoffman-Kensington Area Food Shelf; Diane Kittelson, Pope County Triad; and Pam Schjei, Brandon-Evansville Summer Rec. Front row l to r – Kathy Schlosser; Megan Hinrichs, Prairie Community Services; Kately Kotek, EmaJean Hanson-Ford and Linzey Gerads, Douglas County HRA; and Dianne Johnson, Hoffman Farmer's Market and Veteran's Memorial Committee.

Through the contributions of Runestone Electric Association's participating members, the Operation Round Up® Trust Board recently approved **\$16,100** to assist local community programs during its quarterly meeting.

REA's Operation Round Up Trust Board, a voluntary board of seven REA members, reviewed and considered 45 grant applications and distributed funds to 37 projects and programs this past quarter. Community-based projects and programs have received over \$1.2 million since the program's inception in 2003. On average, participating REA members contribute **\$6.08 for the year**. Proof that small change adds up. Best of all, 95% of all funds collected are distributed as grants.

### Attention Non-Profits!

The deadline for the next round of funding is **August 9, 2024**.

Application forms can be completed at [www.RunestoneElectric.com](http://www.RunestoneElectric.com).

#### Fire Departments & First Responders:

- » Holmes City First Responders - Radios (\$700)
- » Glenwood Fire Department - ice rescue boat (\$700)

#### Community:

- » Trysil Bethesda Lutheran Cemetery Association - cemetery maintenance (\$300)
- » Our Saviors Ten Mile Lake Quilters - quilting supplies (\$300)
- » Life Connections - car seat program (\$1,000)
- » Piece Makers Quilt Group - quilting supplies (\$300)
- » Glenwood Lakes Area Welcome Center - community movie in the park (\$200)
- » Bethel Cemetery Association - cemetery maintenance (\$300)
- » Hello Neighbor - program sponsorship (\$500)
- » Prairie Harvest Fest - community event (\$250)
- » Sharing Love & Hope - summer food backpack program (\$1,000)
- » Prairie Community Services - CPR manikins (\$250)
- » St. Mary's Mission Group - quilting supplies (\$300)

#### Community Cont...

- » Garfield Action Committee - playground project (\$500)
- » Conexiones - community event (\$250)
- » Rune Stone Days - fishing for life (\$250)
- » Let's Go Fishing - Alexandria Area Lakes - Veteran's Day on the Lake event (\$500)
- » Van Loon Cemetery Association - cemetery maintenance (\$300)
- » Douglas County HRA - security and utility deposits (\$500)
- » Prairie Woodcarvers - woodcarving tools for group classes (\$500)
- » Hoffman Farmer's Market - music and supplies (\$500)
- » Shield 616 - high-velocity bullet-proof vests for law enforcement (\$500)
- » Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County - educational banners (\$500)
- » Alexandria Nordic Ski Club - equipment (\$200)
- » West Moe Lutheran Church - community barn dance (\$200)
- » Hoffman Veteran's Memorial Committee - Veteran's memorial (\$500)
- » Garfield Community Club - community celebration (\$300)

#### Youth:

- » Minnewaska Area Post Prom - (\$200)
- » Northern Lights Council Boy Scouts of America - campership assistance (\$500)
- » Alexandria Area High School Trap Team (\$250)
- » RUSC Kinship Mentoring - Dolly Parton Imagination Library (\$250)
- » Douglas Area Trails Association - education materials (\$500)
- » Brandon & Evansville Summer Rec - summer programming (\$400)
- » Alex Brush & Palette Club - Youth Community Art Fair (\$200)

#### Seniors:

- » Osakis Senior Citizen's Club - community center improvements (\$500)
- » Western Prairie Human Services - Pope County TRIAD Senior Expo (\$500)
- » Lakes Area Age Friendly - awareness materials (\$200)

# TRUCKS FOR SALE



**2015 Dodge Ram 1500**

Extended cab, 5.7 Liter V8 Automatic Transmission, Power windows, locks, and mirrors. 213K miles. Sold with the strobe light.



**2015 Dodge Ram 1500**

Extended cab, 5.7 Liter V8 Automatic Transmission, Power windows, locks, and mirrors. 125K miles. Sold with tonneau cover and Weather Guard toolbox.

Bids are now being accepted to sell two pickups. The trucks may be viewed at REA's Operation Center from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Monday - Friday until July 15, 2024. The equipment will be sold "as is" and "with all faults." REA's Purchase Agreement form will need to be signed by the buyer prior to closing. Cash payment required, no checks please. REA reserves the right to accept or reject any and all offers.

**Include your name, phone number, and bid in a sealed envelope and submit to:**

REA Truck Bid  
6839 Power Lane SW  
Alexandria, MN 56308

**Deadline for submitting a bid is July 15, 2024.**

## CoBank Sharing Success Grant Program!

Utilizing the matching grant program provided by CoBank, one of REA's lenders, REA was able to award a \$832 donation to United Way of Douglas and Pope Counties and a \$850 donation to Breakfast on the Farm.



**United Way of Douglas and Pope Counties** REA Directors front row left to right: Barbara Johnson, Joel Seela, Dave Staples, United Way Executive Director Jen Jabas, Andy Anderson, Matthew Mattson and Mike Loken.

**Pope County Farm Bureau Breakfast on the Farm** REA Directors from left to right: Andy Anderson, Dave Staples, Joel Seela, Tiffany Kobberman - representing Breakfast on the Farm, Matthew Mattson, Mike Loken and Barb Johnson.

## NEWSLINE

The official monthly publication of Runestone Electric Association.

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**24/7: 800-473-1722**

**Office Hours:**

7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mon- Fri.

**Board of Directors**

District 1: Gary (Andy) Anderson, President

District 2: Barbara Johnson, Director

District 3: Open

District 4: Dave Staples, Secretary

District 5: Mike Loken, Vice President

District 6: Joel Seela, Director

District 7: Matthew Mattson, Treasurer

**Editorial Staff**

Al Haman, CEO

Sue Lundeen, Editor

Ally Koudela, Communications Specialist

**In Case of a Power Outage**

- » Please call 800-473-1722 for 24-hour service. Please report any tree branches in lines, twisted wires, broken poles and if your neighbors are also out of power.
- » Be sure to have a corded phone or a charged cell phone in the house, because cordless phones won't work when the power is out.
- » Program the number above into your cell phone for easy access.
- » Never assume we know you are without power. Always call to report an outage.

*REA will use reasonable diligence to furnish adequate and dependable electric service, but it cannot and does not guaranty continuous and uninterrupted service.*

**Sign up to get text messages on control days!**

Simply text #loadcontrol to 22300.

*Msg and data rates apply.*

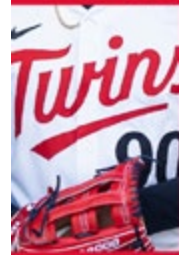
**This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer**

**COMMUNITY FUND**

## YOUTH BASEBALL CLINIC!

ALEXANDRIA, MN

FREE TO ATTEND! OPEN TO EVERYONE, AGES 6-12!



**DATE:**

SATURDAY  
AUGUST 3

**TIME:**

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**FIELD:**

ALEXANDRIA HS  
SOFTBALL COMPLEX  
4300 PIONEER RD SE  
ALEXANDRIA, MN 56308

**HOST:**

ALEXANDRIA PUBLIC  
SCHOOL COMMUNITY  
EDUCATION



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