

# ATTENTION High School Seniors! It's Time to Apply!

Apply for one of **nineteen \$1,000 scholarships** available through a random drawing.

**Deadline to apply is March 1!**



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Apply

# NEWSLINE

January 2025

District Meetings pg 3 Operation Round Up Grants pg 4



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SmartHub



## Pay Online with Smarthub

Pay your bill and access your account anywhere, anytime! With your Smarthub account you can make payments with a checking or savings account, pay with a credit or debit card, manage your autopay, monitor your usage and more! To sign up, scan the QR code or visit [runestoneelectric.com](http://runestoneelectric.com). You'll need your REA account number and an email address to get started.

## WAYS TO PAY

To ensure the highest level of security for your financial information, we will no longer be processing credit card payments over the phone in our local office. Moving forward, all over the phone payments will be directed to a secure, external payment processing center.

You are still welcome to call the office with your payment, and we can transfer you to the secure system. Along with this way to pay, REA offers many convenient payment methods! Check out the infographics to see them all!

Never forget to pay your bill again with REA's Auto Pay Program. The **automatic payments come out on the due date** from a checking, savings, debit or credit card. Sign up through SmartHub.



### Autopay



### In Person

Stop by the Alexandria office Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM to 4 PM to pay by check, cash or card.



### By Check

As it's always been, you can mail us a check or drop it in the dropbox located at our office in Alexandria.



Feel the ease of instantly paying your bill anytime with REA's Secure Pay program. Simply call 1-855-941-3549 and pay using a check, credit card or debit card.

### Pay by Phone



### Pay Now

Make a quick, single transaction without having to register for a SmartHub account. Visit [runestoneelectric.com](http://runestoneelectric.com) to get started

### Remember to Update your Phone Numbers!

To verify the phone number(s) associated with your account, check the section under your name in the top-left corner of your bill. If the number is incorrect, you can update it through SmartHub or by calling our office at 800-473-1722.



## REA is turning **90** in 2025!



Since our humble beginnings in 1935, when dedicated volunteers went door-to-door to sign up farmers and bring electricity to the rural communities of West Central Minnesota, REA has remained committed to serving you, our members. Cheers to 90 years of progress, service, and growth as we continue to power the future!



**Al Haman**  
CEO

# A Note from the CEO

## REA Board Approves 2025 Budget

You've heard me talk about it over the past year - upward pressures on all costs and inflation impact everything we do.

First, our wholesale power cost is projected to increase by 7.6% in 2025. Since this increase

from our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), is largely beyond our control, it was decided to pass this additional cost through by adding it to the wholesale power cost adjustment on members' bills.

The WPCA is not new and something we have utilized for many years. We start each year with a base, and then the WPCA can vary each month based on additional charges or credits on our power bill from GRE. The WPCA is applied on a per kilowatt-hour (kWh) basis to energy sold. For 2024, the WPCA base for general service accounts was \$.01047 per kWh and will increase to \$.01630 per kWh for 2025. The WPCA varies among different rate classes. Please see the graphic below for how the WPCA appears on a residential account with off-peak heating (heat pump) and water heating. Some off-peak rate classes will see a higher increase.

Then, in early November 2024, we compiled the preliminary budget, which reflected an increase in

expenses. After extensive discussion and analysis, we identified several key areas where we can reduce or defer expenditures. These adjustments will help improve our margin without increasing monthly fixed charges. I believe these changes will not have a negative impact on power quality or the duration of outages in the near term.

We didn't think increasing the monthly fixed charge was reasonable while the wholesale power cost rose significantly. However, we will need to reinstate funding for these programs in 2026. We expect wholesale power costs to stabilize next year and allow more flexibility in our budget decisions.

Our goal in 2025 is to achieve a margin of \$1.4 million. Margin is the difference between a cooperative's income and its expenses. Over time, we return the margin to our members in the form of capital credits. If, for some reason, our projections are wrong and we have unexpected additional margin, the Board has asked that we keep the door open to restore the cut funding on a case-by-case basis.

As we begin this new year, we assure you that we are diligently working to control costs while continuing to deliver the safe, reliable electricity you expect from us.

Billing Period		Days	Meter	Meter Type	Readings		Meter Multiplier	kWh Usage
From	To				Present	Previous		
11/01/24	12/01/24	30	12345	Main Meter	36979	35284	1	1,695
11/01/24	12/01/24	30	12345	Off Peak	5647	5625	20	440

Messages From REA	
▶ Savings From Off Peak Program \$10.78	
▶ Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Our office will be closed on Wednesday, December 25, and Wednesday, January 1. We have a 24-hour answering service to take your call, please call 800-473-1722.	
▶ You are invited to REA's Christmas Open House at the REA office on Thursday, December 19th, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM.	
▶ Decorate your home, farm or business for Christmas and you could win a \$100 bill credit. See details about the REA Christmas Light Contest in the November issue of Newsline or visit <a href="http://www.runestoneelectric.com">www.runestoneelectric.com</a> .	

Previous Account Activity		
Previous Balance		\$245.63
Payment Received - Thank You		-\$245.63
<b>Balance Before Current Charges</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>
Current Activity		
Fixed Charge		\$52.50
Energy - Main Meter	1,255 kWh @ \$0.0969	\$121.61
Off Peak	440 kWh @ \$0.0724	\$31.86
WPCA	440 kWh @ \$0.01630	\$7.17
WPCA	1,255 kWh @ \$0.01630	\$20.46
WPCA - Yard Light	21 kWh @ \$0.01630	\$0.34
1 - Yard Light 73w LED	21 kWh	\$9.40
State Tax (6.875%)		\$16.08
Douglas County Transit Sales & Use Tax (0.5%)		\$1.17
<b>Total Current Activity</b>		<b>\$260.59</b>
<b>Total Amount Due On 12/26/2024</b>		<b>\$260.59</b>

### What is WPCA?

The WPCA (wholesale power cost adjustment) is applied on a per kilowatt-hour (kWh) basis to energy sold. The WPCA can vary each month based on additional charges or credits on our power bill.

## REA Board of Director Meeting Highlights - November 2024

- » Reviewed the Financial Report for October 2024. Decreased revenue for the month was offset by decreased expenses. The same is true for the year. The REA margin is close to the budgeted amount.
- » CEO Haman reported on the Heartland Security board meeting and REA employee small group meetings. The small group meetings were to inform the employees of increasing costs and to gather cost-saving ideas. He also reported the theft of an underground cable reel used by our underground contractor at a job site. Insurance will cover our loss less the deductible.
- » President Anderson reported on the October Great River Energy (GRE) Board Meeting and reviewed GRE's proposed 2025 budget and rate drivers.
- » Manager of Energy Services & Business Development Ryan Rooney provided an update on the Aclara DRU and Aquanta water heater controller project
- » Approved revisions to Policy E-04 Credit and Loan Program. CEO Haman explained that employees no longer use the Employee Personal Computer Loan program and that it should be removed from the policy.
- » Manager of Finance Janet Nelson and CEO Haman presented the 2025 draft budget and answered questions from the Board.
- » **The regular January Board Meeting will be Thursday, January 28, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.**

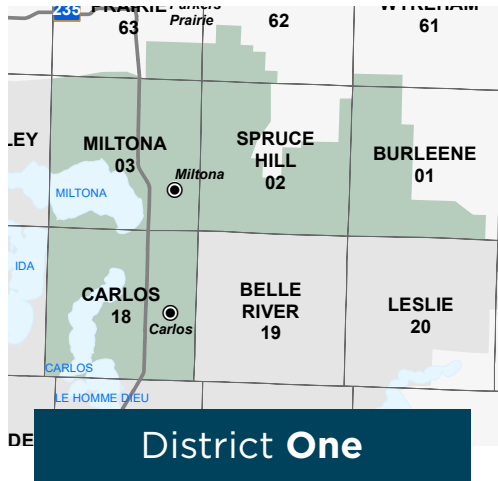
# Attend Your District Meeting in February

## Districts 1, 3 and 4 Elect Directors in 2025

### Enjoy a meal, nominate directors, and visit with neighbors!

District Meetings offer REA members an opportunity to have a light meal, nominate one or more candidates for the office of director, learn more about their electric cooperative, talk with their elected representatives, and visit with neighbors. In addition, all members in attendance will have their name entered in a drawing to win door prizes. We look forward to seeing you!

Please RSVP by calling REA at 800-473-1722, emailing [rea@runestoneelectric.com](mailto:rea@runestoneelectric.com), or on our Facebook event.



**District One**

#### District One Meeting

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

**Miltona Community Center**  
5590 Co Rd 14 NE, Miltona

**5:30 p.m. Light Meal**  
**6:00 p.m. Meeting**



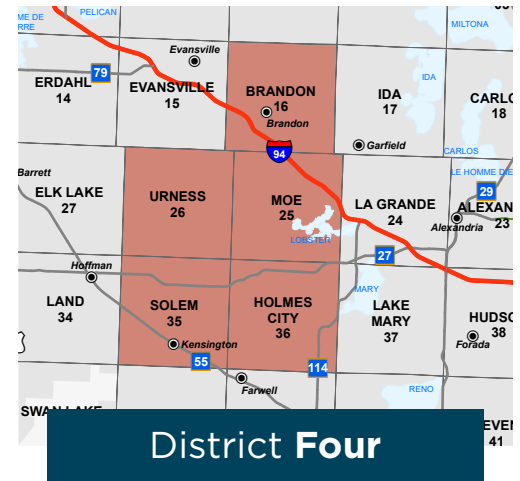
**District Three**

#### District Three Meeting

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

**Hoffman Community Center**  
127 Main Ave, Hoffman

**5:30 p.m. Light Meal**  
**6:00 p.m. Meeting**



**District Four**

#### District Four Meeting

Thursday, February 13, 2025

**West Moe Lutheran Church**  
16249 Co Rd 8 NW, Brandon

**5:30 p.m. Light Meal**  
**6:00 p.m. Meeting**

### What is required to be a REA Director?

REA Bylaws Article III, Section 7. Director Qualifications.

**No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director of the Cooperative who:**

- (a) is not a bona fide member of the Cooperative receiving electric service from the Cooperative in the district that the director represents or would represent if elected;
- (b) is not a bona fide resident of the district from which he or she is elected or for which he or she is a candidate; (bona fide resident shall be defined as occupying and continuously and materially purchasing electric service at a location within any director district from which the director is elected or for which he or she is a candidate for at least nine (9) months each calendar year);
- (c) is in any way employed by or substantially financially interested in an enterprise substantially competing with the Cooperative or any Cooperative-affiliated business;
- (d) within five (5) years preceding a director candidate's nomination was or during service on the Board of Directors is adjudged to be guilty of a felony;
- (e) within five (5) years preceding a director candidate's nomination was a full-time employee of the Cooperative;
- (f) within five (5) years preceding a director candidate's nomination was an employee of a statewide association of electric cooperatives, an electric generation and transmission cooperative, or any other entity in which an electric cooperative is a member.

- (g) within five (5) years preceding a director candidate's nomination or during his or her term if elected was or becomes employed by a labor union which represents, has represented, or has endeavored to represent any employee of the cooperative;
- (h) is a close relative\* of an incumbent who is not up for reelection at that time;
- (i) is a close relative\* of an employee of the Cooperative;
- (j) is or becomes the full-time employee or agent or, who is or becomes the full-time employer or principal of, another director;
- (k) does not have the capacity to enter legally binding contracts;
- (l) is absent from three or more regular meetings ("Unexcused Absences") of the Board of Directors during any consecutive twelve month period, unless excused for good cause (an "Excused Absence") by the Board. If a director participates in more than one regular meeting during any consecutive twelve month period by electronic communication, that director shall be considered absent from that meeting for purposes of determining the number of the director's Unexcused Absences, unless the attendance by electronic communication is approved for good cause by the Board.

\*A "close relative" is a person who is by blood, law, or marriage (including half, step, foster, and adoptive relations) a child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, or sibling); or is a spouse or resides in the same residence.

A member that is an authorized farm corporation or family farm corporation may select an individual member residing on or actively operating the farm to be eligible for election to the board.



# Making a Difference with REA's Operation Round Up®



Representing some of the organizations receiving Operation Round Up® grants in December, front row from left to right: Staci Helwig, Osakis Women's Association; Sandra Dunn, TAIL-Wind Direction; and Brooklyn Mitteness, Skylar Wagner and Kevin Wagner Lakes Area Alpine Ski Team. Middle row left to right- Jan Arneson, Pope County Families in Need; Jean Johnson, Honor Quilts of West Central MN; Doug Garin, Experimental Aircraft Association; Aaron Feltman, Love, INC; Sara Robinson, MN Lakes Maritime Society; Jolene Schriener, Jingle Bells; Vivian Bentley, Lands Cemetery Association; and Stan Smith, Hoffman Senior Citizens. Back row left to right - David Arneson, Pope County Families in Need; Todd Roth, Toys for Kids - Marine Corp League; Kris Chisholm, Car Care Program; Dean Blade, Rose Hill - Trinity Cemetery Association, and Jeff Gaffaney, Operation Round Up Trust Board Member.

Through the contributions of Runestone Electric Association's participating members, the Operation Round Up® Trust Board recently approved \$17,100 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 27 grant applications and distributed funds to 25 projects and programs. Community-based projects and programs have received over \$1.3 million since the program's inception in 2003. On average, participating REA members will contribute \$6.06 for the year 2024. Proof that small change adds up. Best of all, 94% of all funds collected are distributed as grants.

### Food Shelf:

- » Outreach Food Shelf - Emergency food supplies (\$2,000)

### Youth:

- » Experimental Aircraft Association - Young Eagle Flights (\$500)
- » Vikingland Junior Shooting Sports - Equipment Funding (500)
- » Osakis After Prom (200); Osakis Trap Club - Uniforms (\$250)
- » Lakes Area Alpine Ski Team - Youth Ski Team Equipment (\$400)
- » Toys for Kids Marine Corps League - Toys (\$1,000)
- » Hancock Post Prom (\$200)
- » Alexandria Youth Football - Youth Football Night (\$400)
- » Long Prairie-Grey Eagle FFA - Vending Machine Repair (\$500)

### Seniors:

- » Hoffman Senior Citizens - Automatic door openers (\$1,000)
- » Central MN Elder Network - Saturday activities (\$500)

### Community:

- » Douglas County Car Care Program - Car Care Elective Course & Car Repair (\$2,000)
- » Minnesota Lakes Maritime Society - Parade of Trees Community Celebration (\$500)
- » True Friends - Outdoor Enrichment for People with Disabilities (\$500)
- » Rose Hill Trinity Cemetery Association - Cemetery Maintenance (\$300)
- » Evansville Community Club - Santa Days (\$250)
- » Jingle Bells Foundation - Jingle Bells Alexandria (\$1,000)
- » Osakis Women's Association - Season of Giving (\$600)
- » Lands Cemetery Association - cemetery maintenance (\$300)
- » Love Inc, DCLA - Fuel & Grocery Cards (\$1,000)
- » Wendell Santa Day - Toys for kids (\$250)
- » Pope County Families in Need - Support for families in need (\$1,450)
- » TAIL-Wind Direction - Greenhouse/Hoop House (\$500)
- » Honor Quilts of West Central Minnesota - Supplies (\$1,000).

**The deadline to apply for the next round of funding is February 7, 2025. Apply at [RunestoneElectric.com](http://RunestoneElectric.com).**

## 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

Allly 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*

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

## Let it GLOW Christmas Light Contest Winners

### Best Large Display:

Paulzine's Winter Wonderland

### Best Small Display:

Johnson Light Display

### Most Creative Display:

Mayer Family Christmas Lights

Thank you to all the entries for spreading the Christmas spirit with your beautiful lights and displays.