

CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS



Dakota Electric's 2016 Annual Meeting and Elections — Thursday, April 28

St. Michael's Social Hall
22120 Denmark Ave.
Farmington, MN 55024

- Registration and informal opportunity to speak with candidates from 6:30 - 7 p.m.
- Business meeting begins at 7 p.m.

VOTING INFORMATION

Survey & Ballot Systems, an independent firm, oversees the voting process and will mail a ballot to every Dakota Electric member on April 11. Members can vote by mail or online at www.dakotaelectric.com. Ballots must be re-

ceived at Survey & Ballot Systems' office no later than noon on April 28, or members may bring their ballots to the annual meeting. Ballots should not be dropped off or mailed to Dakota Electric Association's office.

To vote online, members will need their account number and e-signature, both of which will be included with the ballot mailed on April 11.

Once again this year, members may use a mobile device to scan the QR code located with the balloting materials to be quickly logged in to vote.

Board Candidates

The following candidates will be placed on the ballot for Dakota Electric Association's 2016 board of directors election.

District 1

David Jones, Lakeville, *incumbent*

District 2

Jim Sheldon, Apple Valley, *incumbent*

District 3

Bill Holton, Apple Valley, *incumbent*
Douglas Bonar, Farmington
Ray Yarwood, Eagan

District 4

Paul Trapp, Hastings, *incumbent*
Jerry Brown, Apple Valley
Greg Oxley, Eagan

All directors are elected by membership vote to serve three-year terms on the 12-person board of directors.



In This Issue

Letter to members/2016 goals	2-3
Bright Ideas for Small Business.....	4
Lighting promotion	5
Commercial Member Lunch & Learn	6
Cold Weather Rule ends April 15.....	7
GreenTouch.....	7

Upcoming events

Apple Valley Home & Garden Expo...	April 2
Board Meeting	April 28, 8:30 a.m.
Annual Meeting.....	April 28, 7 p.m.
Energy Trends Expo	May 3
Commercial Lunch & Learn	May 3

April 2016



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



2015 Year-End Review

Letter To Our Members

Dakota Electric Association made progress on many projects in 2015 including fiber optic communication connections to our 30 substations and the replacement of our 20-year-old customer information software (CIS) system. The groundwork was completed and substantial completion of the CIS system is expected by the end of 2016. Both projects will allow us to serve our member-owners even better.

Strategic Plan

The board and its committees intensified our focus on our strategic plan and financial oversight. We are pleased to report that Dakota Electric Association has received yet another clean audit from the independent auditor. In 2016, our board and senior management will complete a thorough review of our strategic plan while scanning a 10-year horizon for proactive changes we need to consider and implement.

Technology

Dakota Electric continues to utilize technology to better serve our member-owners. Our Geographical Information System (GIS) software allows us to monitor the location, age and reliability of all our field equipment including poles, transformers and wire. With this information we can optimize our investment in maintenance and replacement to ensure power quality and reliability at the lowest possible cost.

Rate case complete

In 2015, we completed our rate case with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Dakota Electric asked for a 2.1 percent increase and after a 16-month process, we were granted a two percent increase. Our previous rate case was filed in 2009. We will continue to control our internal expenses to prolong the time between rate cases.

In addition, we continue to watch and provide input on a variety of regulatory and legislative initiatives that could change the way we do business.

Solar

The board of directors recently approved the construction of a two-megawatt solar installation in Dakota County that will be dedicated to our member-owners. The project will consist of approximately 8,000 solar panels and should be operational by late summer.

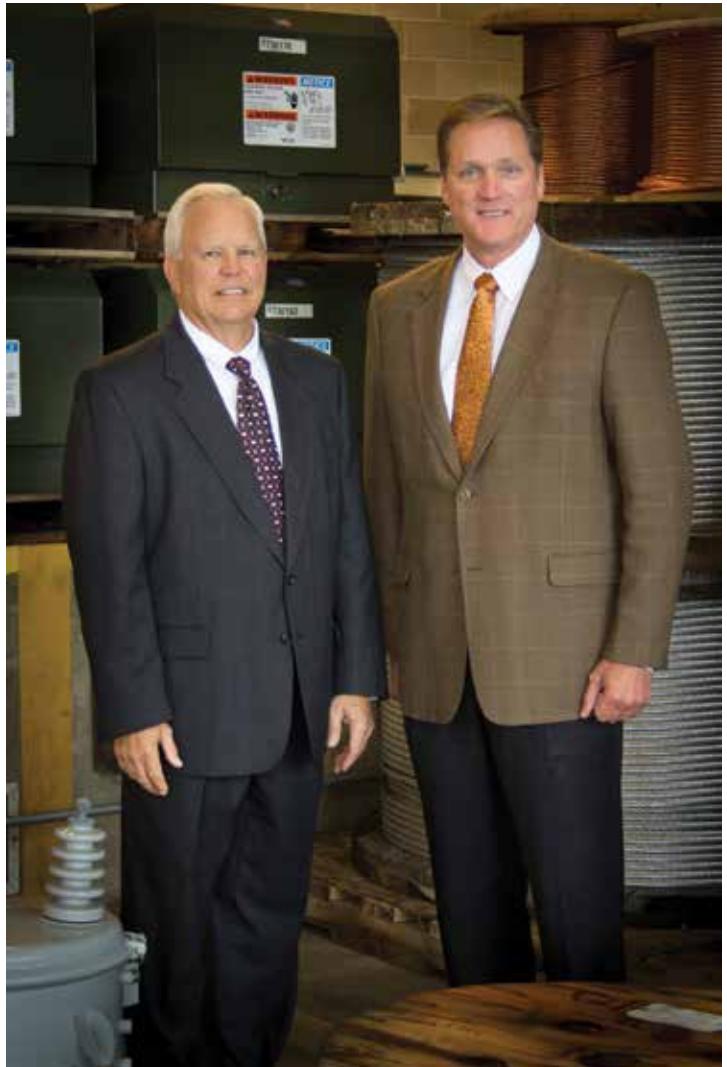
On behalf of the board and employees of Dakota Electric Association, we thank you for the privilege to serve you and provide value to the communities we serve.



GREG MILLER
President and CEO



JIM SHELDON
Chairman, Board of Directors





2015: Continued achievement in service and reliability

As a member-owned cooperative, we strive to provide quality service to our members. Below is a brief overview of our 2015 achievements:

- Reliability indices, as reported to the Public Utilities Commission, continue to be among the best in the nation:
 - Power available more than 99.99 percent of the time.
 - Outage frequency per member averaged less than one outage every three years (normalized for major events).
 - Outage duration averaged 18.4 minutes per member, per year (normalized for major events).
- Installed field devices to allow remote monitoring and control of distribution equipment for improved reliability.
- Helped members conserve more than 15 million kilowatt-hours (kWhs) of electricity, which is enough energy to power approximately 1,500 homes for an entire year.
- Reduced our wholesale power bill by approximately \$18 million through member participation in Energy Wise® off-peak programs.
- Member service representatives received 156,204 calls in 2015 and answered 90.8 percent of calls in 20 seconds or less.
- Meter readers completed approximately 1.4 million meter readings, estimating less than one percent of all readings.
- Awarded \$200,000 in scholarships and educational donations using unclaimed capital credits.

2016 Goals

RELIABILITY

- Purchase land and begin site preparation work for a new substation near Randolph.
- Continue evaluating advanced grid systems to determine benefits and cost.
- Install remote control field device automation.
- Continue improving communications among substations and system operations through increased use of fiber optics.

EFFICIENCY

- Encourage residential members to conserve 4.9 million kWhs of electricity through energy-efficiency rebates and programs.
- Offer rebates and grants to help business members conserve at least 11.5 million kWhs.
- Launch a new program that provides turn-key solutions for small business lighting retrofits.

AFFORDABILITY

- Work with our wholesale power supplier, Great River Energy, to minimize power cost increases.
- Work with legislators on the impact potential legislation may have on Dakota Electric members.

COMMUNITY

- Distribute more than 5,200 tree seedlings to communities and schools.
- Send five high school students to Washington, D.C. to learn about our nation's government.
- Educate area students and adults about electrical safety.
- Actively support the communities we serve through various volunteer efforts.

MEMBERSHIP

- Pay out more than \$2.5 million in capital credits.
- Host the annual Member Appreciation Event at the Minnesota Zoo.
- Launch a smartphone app that allows members to quickly report outages and more.

Bright Ideas for Small Businesses

Dakota Electric launches new lighting rebate program for small commercial members

In January, Dakota Electric rolled out a new rebate program targeting the cooperative's small commercial members. The program, called Bright Ideas for Small Businesses, is designed to save business owners energy and money through the installation of energy-efficient lighting.

"Oftentimes, small businesses have limited financial resources and time, limited knowledge of lighting products, and lack access to quality contractors," said Tyler Kashdan, energy services representative. "So this program specifically targets those barriers that may prevent a small business from investing in energy efficiency."

Jill Eide, Dakota Electric's energy services representative who primarily works with small commercial accounts, agrees and says this program provides a turn-key solution for the members.

"With this program, we simplify the rebate process by providing a contractor and reducing the paperwork to streamline the implementation," said Eide. "Small business owners, who may be strapped for time and resources, don't have to hunt for a lighting contractor or worry about if they are getting a quality-

installed job."

Small commercial accounts, with peak demand of 25 kW or less, make up more than 80 percent of Dakota Electric's commercial membership, yet only 30 percent of the rebate projects Eide worked on last year came from this segment.

"We really want to help our small business owners implement new energy-efficiency technologies, and we are confident this program will make it an easy decision for them to do so," Eide said.

Since the program was launched in January, 16 projects have been completed resulting in savings of more than 130,000 kilowatt-hours annually. But more importantly, says Kashdan and Eide, the program enables Dakota Electric to connect with small commercial members who have historically been an underserved segment of the member base.

Tom Rother, owner of Network Management, a property management company in Apple Valley, had been contemplating a lighting upgrade for the inside of his office suite for the last few years. The company is located in a strip mall Rother owns.

ENERGY TRENDS EXPO

Tuesday, May 3 | 6 - 8 p.m.

Eagan Community Center

1501 Central Parkway • Eagan, MN 55121

Breakout Sessions

6:30 p.m. - Solar basics

7:15 p.m. - Electric vehicle basics

 This free, informal vendor expo will feature local solar installers and electric vehicle experts who can provide helpful resources and guidance for anyone interested in learning more about residential solar energy projects or purchasing an electric vehicle. Registration is not required to attend.



**DAKOTA
ELECTRIC
ASSOCIATION**
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

A community event sponsored by Dakota Electric Association in cooperation with Lakeville Friends of the Environment.

After being introduced to the Bright Ideas for Small Businesses program, Rother partnered with his tenants to retrofit the lighting throughout most of the property. He also took advantage of the program to make lighting upgrades to a few of the condo/townhome properties his company manages. Rother doubts he would have done anything close to what he was able to do had the program not existed.

"It really was a no-brainer for me," said Rother. "This program was so simple and easy, and the generous rebate amount from Dakota Electric offset a majority of the project cost. I would definitely recommend it to other small business owners. It was a home run for us."

Program qualifications and rebate details

- Small businesses with peak demand of 25 kW or less.
- If the business has multiple accounts under 25 kW, each one qualifies separately.
- Dakota Electric will provide a rebate toward the cost of your lighting-efficiency improvements, not to exceed \$5,000.

If you would like to learn more about the Bright Ideas for Small Businesses program, contact the Energy Experts® at 651-463-6243.

Funds are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.



Dakota Electric Energy Services Representatives Jill Eide (left) and Tyler Kashdan (far right) presented Tom Rother (middle left) and Dan Rother (middle right) of Network Management with \$15,000 in rebates for energy-efficient lighting upgrades made to their properties.



Due to the presence of mercury, CFLs must be recycled. In Minnesota, it is illegal to place them directly in the garbage.



Save on your next purchase of GE ENERGY STAR® certified CFL and LED bulbs.

UP TO **\$5 OFF**

select GE ENERGY STAR® light bulbs at participating Walmart stores

UP TO **\$3 OFF**

select GE ENERGY STAR® light bulbs with a coupon included with bills mailed April 12-May 5

Home Lighting Promotion runs April 4 – August 31, 2016.

Visit energywisemn.com to learn more and enter for a chance to win a \$500 VISA gift card.

ENERGY WISE  MN

Commercial members: Join us for a Lunch and Learn on May 3

Join us for a Lunch and Learn meeting and hear Beverly Jones Heydinger, chair of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, present "Implementing Energy Policy Through Utility Regulation." The presentation will briefly describe the Commission and its role, the challenges and opportunities presented by current circumstances and the process of setting electric rates.

Tuesday, May 3

11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Dakota Electric Association

Lunch is provided.

11:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Registration

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

"Implementing Energy Policy Through Utility Regulation"

12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

Tour of Dakota Electric's control center

To register

Visit <https://dakotaelectric.eventbrite.com> and register to attend.

Registration deadline is April 29. Questions? Contact Brenda Kadlec at 651-463-6234 or bkadlec@dakotaelectric.com.



Are you ready to make energy-efficiency upgrades to your business?

Let the experts at Dakota Electric help you along the way. With a variety of rebates available, Dakota Electric can help your business make cost-effective efficiency upgrades that save energy and money.

- Custom EnergyGrant®
- Lighting
- Motors and drives
- **NEW!** Commercial Kitchens
- **NEW!** Electric Forklifts
- Heating, cooling and ventilation
- Agricultural programs
- Vending controls
- Energy studies



Programs are subject to terms and conditions and may change without notice. Funds are limited. Contact your account manager or an Energy Expert® at 651-463-6243 as soon as possible for rebate details.

WE HAVE A SPECIAL CONNECTION.



We're not your typical electric company, we're a local not-for-profit electric cooperative. We don't have customers, we have members. People aren't just our number one priority, they're the reason we're here.

To learn more about the cooperative difference, visit DakotaElectric.com

YOUR SOURCE FOR POWER. AND GREAT SERVICE.



MINNESOTA ZOO

**FARM BABIES
MAR 25 - APR 30**

**CUTE
HAPPENS
DAILY.
MNZOO.ORG**



Sponsored By:





Circuits Quick Clips

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule ends April 15

The State of Minnesota set up the Cold Weather Rule to protect residential, heat-affected customers — who make and keep a payment plan — from disconnection of service between October 15 and April 15.

Most Cold Weather Rule payment plans last until April 15 unless you make other arrangements with Dakota Electric. Your service could be shut off if you have a past due balance on April 15 and do not make and keep a new payment plan.

Member service representatives are ready to work with you to avoid disconnection. Contact Dakota Electric at 651-463-6212 **before April 15**.

Volunteers needed for annual GreenTouch event

Dakota Electric seeks volunteers to work at Whitetail Woods Regional Park in Farmington during the Minnesota Touchstone Energy® GreenTouch event. Dakota Electric members will do natural resource restoration work, such as planting trees, throughout the morning.

Saturday, May 7

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Whitetail Woods Regional Park, 17100 Station Trail, Farmington

After a morning of work and a free lunch, stay and enjoy hiking, a unique nature play area and more at Dakota County's newest park. All ages, organizations and scout groups looking for a service project are welcome, but space is limited.



To register

Call Joe Miller at 651-463-6178 or email publicrelations@dakotaelectric.com by April 28. A limited number of opportunities are available.



FREE Minnesota Twins Youth Clinic coming to Farmington

In partnership with Great River Energy, Dakota Electric's wholesale power provider, the Minnesota Twins Play Ball! Minnesota Youth Clinic is once again coming to Dakota Electric's area. The clinic is designed to teach basic fundamentals including hitting, fielding and throwing for boys and girls ages 6-13, while also providing participants with positive messages about staying in school and away from drugs and alcohol.

Saturday, May 14

10 - 11:30 a.m. (ages 6-9)

11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. (ages 10-13)

Tiger 1 Baseball Field - Dodge Middle School
Hwy. 50 and Akin Rd. | Farmington

- No registration is required to participate. Just show up on the day of the clinic and be ready to learn and have fun.
- The Twins will provide most of the equipment; however, youth participants are asked to bring their own baseball or softball gloves.



Board of Directors

District 1

John (Jack) DeYoe

David Jones, Treasurer

Gerald F. Pittman, Vice Chair

District 2

Janet L. Lekson, MREA Director

Jim Sheldon, Chair

Clay Van De Bogart, Great River
Energy Director**District 3**

Kenneth H. Danner

William F. Holton

Margaret D. Schreiner, Great River
Energy Director**District 4**

Paul Bakken

Judy H. Kimmes

Paul A. Trapp, Secretary



Circuits is printed on recycled paper with soy ink.

Please read and recycle.

Greg Miller, President & CEO**Tanya Wolfs, Editor**

4300 220th Street West
Farmington, MN 55024
651-463-6212
www.dakotaelectric.com

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
DAKOTA ELECTRIC
ASSOCIATION

April 11 is Linemen Appreciation Day!

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association has dedicated the second Monday in April as a time to thank and recognize lineworkers and the important work they do in our communities. Dakota Electric salutes our 38 hard working lineworkers who often work in challenging conditions at all hours of the day and night to keep the lights on for our more than 104,000 member-owners.



#ThankALineman



Contact Us

Member service & drive-up window

7 a.m. – 7 p.m. Monday - Friday

651-463-6212 or 1-800-874-3409

Minnesota Relay Service 711

Lobby 7 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday

4300 220th Street West, Farmington, MN 55024

24-hour outage & emergency service

651-463-6201 or 1-800-430-9722

Underground cable locations

Gopher State One Call 811 or 651-454-0002 or
1-800-252-1166

Tree trimming & street lights 651-463-6287

Dakota Electric is an equal opportunity/
affirmative action employerwww.dakotaelectric.com
customerservice@dakotaelectric.com

Program information and offers in this newsletter
are subject to change without notice.