

# CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS



## Dakota Electric's 2017 Annual Meeting and Elections — Thursday, April 27

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 10. Members can vote by mail or online at [www.dakotaelectric.com](http://www.dakotaelectric.com). Ballots must be re-

ceived at Survey & Ballot Systems' office no later than noon on April 27, 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 10.

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 2017 board of directors election.

#### District 1

John (Jack) DeYoe, Lakeville, incumbent

#### District 2

Janet Lekson, Rosemount, incumbent

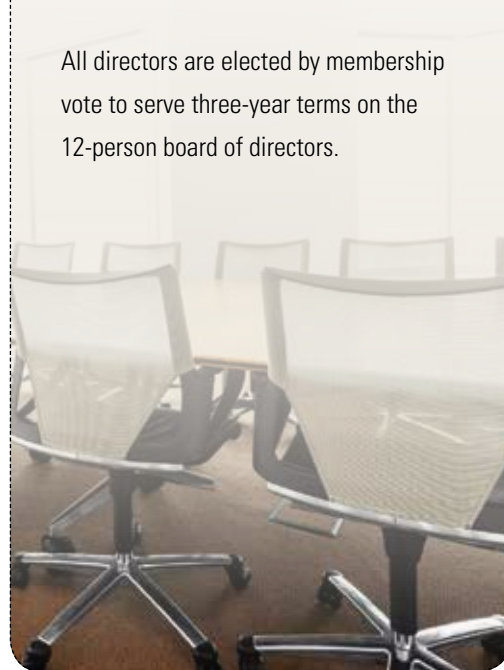
#### District 3

Margaret Schreiner, Eagan, incumbent  
Douglas Bonar, Farmington

#### District 4

Paul Bakken, Eagan, incumbent

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



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### Upcoming events

Linemen Appreciation Day ..... April 10  
Cold Weather Rule ends ..... April 15  
Board Meeting ..... April 27, 8:30 a.m.  
Annual Meeting ..... April 27, 7 p.m.  
Energy Trends Expo ..... May 9, 6-8 p.m.

April 2017



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# 2016 Year-End Review

## Letter To Our Members

The employees of Dakota Electric Association have been, and will always be, the key to our ability to achieve high marks for excellent service and world-class reliability. As we equip these employees with technology-based tools and devices, it allows us to take our customer experience to another level.

This past year we launched our first smartphone app, which is an outage reporting application for members. It is used to report power outages and to receive information related to active outages with just a push of a button. In addition, we recently launched a new website that now features online outage reporting, responsive design for mobile devices and better organized content and navigation. Our website sees nearly 400,000 visitors a year so functionality and ease of use are important. We hope you find the new site to be more intuitive and user-friendly.

### Strategic Planning

This past year the board conducted a rigorous review of the opportunities and threats facing Dakota Electric. From this process, a full section was added to our strategic plan related to information services. References to cyber security, electric vehicles and economic development were also added to the plan. Dakota Electric's strategic plan looks well into the future but emphasizes the next five years.

### Reliability

Dakota Electric's reliability numbers are amazing. On average, our members experience an outage once every three years. Not many utilities can say that. Reliability is a result of proactive planning, design, maintenance, tree trimming and knowledgeable employees that respond quickly, day and night, in all kinds of weather. Dakota Electric's board of directors has approved supplemental budget amounts the past three years to accelerate the replacement of aging cable and devices in the field to prevent outages before they happen.

### Solar

Member-owned solar generation installations doubled last year. There are now more than 80 installations on our electrical system. The complexity of our system design has increased now that power can flow in both directions. Dakota Electric works closely with our members and their solar contractors to ensure a smooth installation that is safe for our lineworkers and members.

Speaking of solar, Dakota Electric is installing a one-megawatt (MW) solar array that will have approximately 3,500 solar panels. This environmentally beneficial installation will be near Hastings, and the energy produced will benefit all of our members by improving our generation resource mix. In addition, our power supplier, Great River Energy, recently shut down Stanton Station, an aging coal generation plant, and approved the construction of a 300-MW wind farm in south-central North Dakota that will generate enough clean, renewable energy to power 120,000 homes.

As you can see, we have a lot of exciting things happening this year and beyond. We will keep you informed every step of the way. On behalf of the board of directors and staff of Dakota Electric Association, thank you for the privilege to serve you, our member-owners.



JIM SHELTON  
*Chairman, Board of Directors*



GREG MILLER  
*President and CEO*





## 2016: 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 2016 achievements:

- Reliability indices, as reported to the Public Utilities Commission, continue to be among the best in the nation:
  - Outage frequency per member averaged less than one outage every three years (normalized for major events).
- Continued the installation of remote monitoring and distribution equipment controls to allow improved restoration times.
- Began installing fiber optic communications to our substations and have about one-third of substations connected to the fiber system.
- Helped members conserve more than 23.2 million kilowatt-hours (kWhs) of electricity, which is enough energy to power more than 2,300 homes for an entire year.
- Reduced our wholesale power bill by approximately \$17 million through member participation in Energy Wise® off-peak programs.
- Member service representatives received 151,641 calls in 2016 and answered 89.2 percent of calls in 20 seconds or less.
- Meter readers completed approximately 1.4 million meter readings, estimating less than three percent of all readings.
- Awarded \$200,000 in scholarships and educational donations using unclaimed capital credits.
- Launched a new program that provides turnkey solutions for small business lighting retrofits.
- Launched smartphone app that allows members to quickly report outages and more.

## 2017 Goals

### RELIABILITY

- Continue the installation of fiber optic communication to more substations in 2017 and 2018.
- Address the poorest performing feeders to improve reliability in outage-prone areas.
- Complete construction on a new substation north of Randolph to improve capacity and service to the southern part of our service territory.
- Review advanced grid proposals and determine if grid enhancements meet project goals for improved service and reliability.

### EFFICIENCY

- Encourage residential members to conserve 4.8 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.

### 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

- 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 outreach programs and volunteer efforts.

### ENVIRONMENT

- Install 1-MW solar array (3,500 panels) near Hastings.
- Distribute more than 6,000 tree seedlings to communities and schools.

### MEMBERSHIP

- Pay out more than \$2.5 million in capital credits.
- Host annual Member Appreciation Event at the Minnesota Zoo

## Be prepared for spring storms

### Severe Weather Awareness Week is April 17-21

Spring can usher in more than April showers. Now through the summer months, thunderstorms can quickly roll in and tornadoes can touch down.

In recognition of Severe Weather Awareness Week (April 17-21), Dakota Electric reminds members to be prepared for storms and power outages by planning ahead, preparing an emergency kit and updating your phone number(s) associated with your account.

#### Report your outage

Dakota Electric makes it easy to report your outage. You now have the option to report your outage via our outage app, our website, or by calling our 24-hour outage and emergency number at 651-463-6201.

Those that download and register Dakota Electric's outage app by April 30 (see below) will be entered into a drawing to win a 32" Samsung LED TV. Our outage app allows you to report your outage with the click of a button. You can also view our outage map and be alerted to the status of the restoration.

In addition, members can now report their power outage via our newly redesigned website at [dakotaelectric.com/power-outages](http://dakotaelectric.com/power-outages) by simply entering the phone number associated with your account. And as always, you can call 651-463-6201 for 24-hour outage and emergency service.



#### Update your account

Please make sure you have your most current phone number(s) listed on your account. Having accurate phone number(s) on file means instant pinpoint location when you report your outage. To update, call 651-463-6212 or visit [dakotaelectric.com/member-services/update-account-information](http://dakotaelectric.com/member-services/update-account-information).

#### Stay away from downed power lines

Always remember to stay away from downed power lines. A downed power line may still be an energized line. If you see a downed power line, keep yourself and others away and call Dakota Electric at 651-463-6201.

**WIN A TV!**  
Members who download and register Dakota Electric's outage app by April 30 will be entered into a drawing to win a 32" Samsung LED TV!

# NEW! OUTAGE APP

Quick. Easy. Informed.

Download our FREE outage app  
on Google Play or the App Store.

Once you have installed the app, you must request a code by visiting [dakotaelectric.com](http://dakotaelectric.com) and clicking on Power Outages > Dakota Electric Outage App. The code is specific to your account and is required to personalize the app to your residence.



GET IT ON  
Google Play



Download on the  
App Store

# Have a successful planting season rooted in safety

As farmers make plans to return to their fields for spring planting, Dakota Electric and the Safe Electricity program ([safe-electricity.org](http://safe-electricity.org)) urge them to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. Operating large equipment near these lines is one of the often overlooked, yet potentially deadly, hazards of working on a farm.

Start by making sure everyone knows to maintain a 10-foot clearance minimum from power lines. "Sometimes a power line is closer than it looks," says Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council's Safe Electricity program. "Helpful safety steps include using a spotter and designating preplanned routes that avoid hazard areas."

Be aware of the increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors now have tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters or cultivators near power lines, and never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.

Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.

"If your equipment does come into contact with power lines, stay in the cab and call Dakota Electric for help," explains Hall. "If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground. Even if a line has landed on the ground, there is still potential for the area to be energized."

Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until help arrives."

If exiting the cab is absolutely necessary because of fire, the proper action is to jump — not step — with both feet together, hitting the ground at the same time. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.



For more tips and information on how to stay safe this planting season, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Save The Date! Energy Trends Expo

**Tuesday, May 9 | 6-8 p.m.**

**Eagan Community Center**

1501 Central Parkway, Eagan, MN 55121

This FREE event will feature:

- Vendor trade show from 6-8 p.m.
- Electric vehicle car show from 6-8 p.m.
- Breakout sessions
  - 6:30 p.m. — Energy storage technologies
  - 7:15 p.m. — Home automation  
Residential solar testimonial
- Door Prizes

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



## Beware of Utility Scams

Dakota Electric reminds members to beware of any suspicious phone calls demanding immediate payment and credit card or personal financial information. Dakota Electric does not ask for this type of information. If you receive a call like this, hang up immediately and call Dakota Electric at 651-463-6212 to verify your account status.



MINNESOTA ZOO

**FARM BABIES**  
**MAR 24 - APR 30**

**CUTE  
HAPPENS  
DAILY.**  
**MNZOO.ORG**



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- Meet some or all of your energy needs with your own renewable energy system.
- Receive a monthly production-based rebate of \$0.50 per watt for installed capacity, with total rebate not to exceed \$4,000.

**Contact the Energy Experts® for details at 651-463-6243.**



  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



# 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.**

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## 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 native wildflowers, throughout the morning.

**Saturday, May 6**

**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](mailto: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 13**

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



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Greg Miller, President & CEO

Tanya Wolfs, Editor



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

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ASSOCIATION

## Thank you, linemen!

### Linemen Appreciation Day is April 10

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 hard-working linemen who often work in challenging conditions at all hours of the day and night to keep the lights on for our more than 105,000 member-owners.

## 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 employer

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

[customerservice@dakotaelectric.com](mailto:customerservice@dakotaelectric.com)



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

#ThankALineman