

CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS



Jeffrey Allbee wins first ever **Dakota Spirit of Excellence** award

At a recent ceremony at the Farmington Fire Station, Assistant Fire Chief Jeffrey Allbee was awarded the first ever Dakota Spirit of Excellence award.

"We created the award to recognize first responders in our service territory and the brave work they do," said Joe Miller, Dakota Electric's public relations director.

Miller said the award is intended to accomplish the following:

- Recognize individuals who serve the community;
- Provide funds to the organization;
- Highlight the great work they are doing;

- A way to thank first responders.

The award highlights a first responder who demonstrates leadership, dedication to serving others, teamwork, and integrity.

Former Farmington Fire Chief Jim Larsen spoke highly of Allbee and said he demonstrates all of those qualities and more.

"Jeff really embodies our mission statement, which is serving those in need, and he does that day in and day out," Larsen said.

Allbee has served as a firefighter since 2006 and is president of the Farming-

ton Firefighters Relief Association. He helped organize the Fire Prevention Week open house, and has helped create core values and mission and vision statements for the department.

He is finishing up Fire Instructor II training, is certified as Fire Officer II, NFPA 472 Hazardous Materials Operations, Fire and Life Safety educator, and he instructs others as a Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education qualified instructor.

"He is one of those people who is involved in everything," said Dakota Electric's CEO Greg Miller. "You can see why this individual is

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Upcoming events

Nominating committee deadline	Dec. 8
Deadline for board candidates.	Dec. 8
Board Meeting	Dec. 21, 8:30 a.m.
Christmas - office closed	Dec. 25-26
New Year's Day - office closed	Jan. 1

December 2017





Greg Miller
President & CEO

As we close 2017, we reflect on a year filled

The employees and board of Dakota Electric Association partnered on several exciting projects this past year. Some were more newsworthy than others.

Electric Bus

We participated in bringing the first all-electric school bus to Minnesota. You may have seen the bus in the Lakeville Pan-O-Prog parade, at the state fair or on the local TV news stations this summer. Thanks to our partnership with Great River Energy and Schmitt & Sons Bus Company, we are excited to have this bus operating in the Lakeville School District and are looking forward to learning about the technology and its performance.

Dakota Solar 2 - Hastings Solar Array

We also recently energized our 1 megawatt (MW) solar array south of Hastings. The project consists of just over 3,900 panels and will produce enough energy to power approximately 150 homes. The energy produced will stay within Dakota Electric's distribution infrastructure to be shared among our member-owners. We have plans to construct a 2-MW solar project next year.

Advanced Grid Infrastructure (AGI)

We completed our research into a solution to replace our aging meters and load control receivers. The advanced meters, commonly referred to as smart meters, do so

much more than just provide a meter reading for billing purposes. They supply the data to detect problems with circuits and transformer loading. They can detect and alert our control center of outages before our members start to call, which will further minimize outage times.

At this time, we have selected our likely vendors for this project and are proceeding with the steps necessary to complete a small pilot program in 2018 and then full deployment, possibly starting in 2019. We will continue to update you about the progress of this important project.

Capital Credits

It's December and that means it's time for capital credits disbursement. Because you are part owner of Dakota Electric, you share in the cooperative's profit margins. This year we are returning more than \$3 million in capital credits to our member-owners. It is a benefit of membership, and we thank you for your patronage.

On behalf of the board and staff at Dakota Electric, it is an honor to serve you with a continued focus on safety, reliability, competitive rates, member services, community and the environment. We are proud of what we have accomplished in 2017 and look forward to next year.

Happy Holidays!

You may get money back!

Dakota Electric to return more than \$3 million in capital credits to members

One of the benefits of cooperative membership is receiving capital credit distributions. It's what sets us apart from investor-owned utilities. While they return a portion of any profits back to their investors, electric cooperatives like Dakota Electric allocate excess margins to you, our member-owners, as "capital credits." We retire — or pay — them when the co-op's financial condition permits.

Dakota Electric is retiring 100 percent of the capital credits allocation from 1989 and 50 percent of the allocation from 1990. Members who purchased electricity in 1989-90, and who are receiving \$5 or more in capital credits, will be mailed a check this month. The amount of each allocation and retirement is based on how much individual members were billed for electric service during that period.

Watch for your check arriving in mid-December. To learn more about capital credits, visit dakotaelectric.com/about-us/capital-credits.

HOW DO CAPITAL CREDITS WORK?

- 1 Dakota Electric tracks how much electricity you buy and how much you pay for it during the year.
- 2 At the end of the year, Dakota Electric calculates whether there are excess margins. This is the amount by which revenue exceeds expenses.
- 3 Dakota Electric allocates the margins to members as capital credits based upon their annual electric bill.
- 4 When the co-op's financial condition permits, the board of directors decides to retire, or pay, the capital credits.
- 5 Dakota Electric notifies you of how and when you will receive your capital credit retirement.



with exciting accomplishments

In January, Dakota Electric launched a new power outage app giving members the ability to report an outage or a streetlight out right from their mobile device. Learn more at dakotaelectric.com/report-an-outage.



In March, the co-op launched a new website, improving the design and navigation, content organization and overall user experience. It also features online outage reporting.



In May, Dakota Electric's newest substation near Randolph was energized. The substation will provide additional capacity to the area in an effort to strengthen reliability.



In July, the state's first all-electric school bus was introduced thanks to a partnership between Dakota Electric, Great River Energy and Schmitt & Sons Bus Company. The bus has a 100-mile range, more than enough to cover its 60-mile route, and it's powered by 100-percent wind energy in the co-op's Revolt program. It began operation in the Lakeville School District this fall.



In November, Dakota Electric's new 1-MW solar array south of Hastings was energized. Unlike a solar garden where members can purchase and own their own panels, this is a utility-scale project. Through a power purchase contract with Great River Energy, Dakota Electric purchases all the solar output for delivery to its member-owners.



2018 RTA change

At this time, Dakota Electric anticipates a Resource and Tax Adjustment (RTA) change in 2018. The final RTA change will be reported in the February issue of *Circuits*.

What is the RTA?

Each month your bill includes an RTA line. The RTA allows Dakota Electric to recover cost increases related to:

- Purchasing electricity from Great River Energy, which generates electricity for members of 28 Minnesota cooperatives;
- energy conservation programs;
- property and real estate taxes.

Category	Amount	Charge Code	Charge Rate	Charge
Service Charge	1.00			1.00
Electricity	100.00			100.00
RTA	10.00			10.00
Total Amount Due	111.00			

The RTA is a direct pass-through of costs, and the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission reviews these costs every year.

Messner wins Township Leader Award

Dakota Electric Association recently awarded Liz Messner, Waterford Township, the Outstanding Township Leader of the Year award. Each year, Dakota Electric seeks to recognize outstanding leadership with the award, and Dakota Electric Director Judy Kimmes attended a recent Dakota County Township Officers Association meeting to present the award to Messner.

"I am very surprised and humbled," Messner said of the award. "This is not a reflection of me as much as on our board to come together and move the township forward."

She has been a Waterford Township Supervisor since 1999 and has also served as chair. She has supported the local community in many ways, including serving on the planning commission, helping to develop a newsletter and website, getting a levy passed, and helping to get a grant award for the historic Waterford bridge. She has also served as Road Commission Liaison and helped improve township roads.

Messner has also brought new ideas and finds solutions for the township.

"Liz listens and is open to new ideas and change," Elizabeth Wheeler, township clerk, said. "She tries to find a 'yes' solution, but has the courage to stand her ground to protect the farming community."

Messner was awarded \$250 to donate to a charity of her choice, which she designated to the John Dudley Memorial Garden to be developed next to the township hall.



Spirit of Excellence award (cont.)

certainly an excellent choice for this award."

Allbee said he is honored and appreciative of the recognition and thanked the rest of the fire department and Dakota Electric. But he mostly wanted to thank his family, who he says bears the brunt of him being gone all the time.

"If it wasn't for my family, I could never do the things I do," Allbee said. "I spend a lot of hours at the fire department, which means they have to pick up the slack and oftentimes attend events, family functions and sporting events without me. They support me through it all, and I couldn't be more appreciative of that."

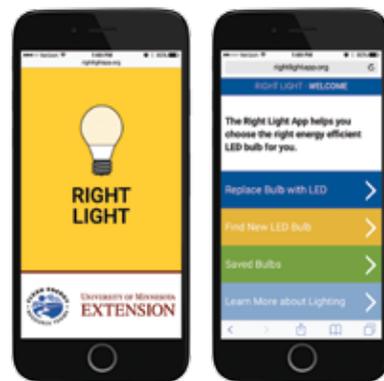
Along with the award for Allbee, Dakota Electric provided a \$5,000 check to the Farmington Fire Department to purchase a chemical monitoring system that can detect airborne hazardous chemicals while fighting fires.

Chief Larsen said the equipment will be a significant upgrade that will save firefighter lives.

Need help buying the right light bulb?

There's an app for that!

How many times have you stood in the shopping aisle trying to figure out what LED light bulb you needed? Or, have you ever purchased an LED bulb only to bring it home and realize it wasn't displaying the right amount of light or color you were expecting?



Enter the Right Light App (<http://rightlightapp.org>), created by the Clean Energy Resource Teams and the University of Minnesota Extension. It's a handy tool right on your cell phone that will walk you step-by-step through different options, from bulb and fixture types to color and brightness suggestions.

To learn more about how to shop for LED bulbs, watch our short video at <https://youtu.be/Gz22Y5J6WPU>.

We make it easy to save on LED light bulbs!

From now until Dec. 31, 2017, you can save the following ways:

- Get \$3 off select Duracell® LED bulbs at Eagan and Apple Valley Batteries + Bulbs stores.
- Online with instant rebates at EnergyWiseMN.com, available only to members of Dakota Electric.
- Up to \$3 per bulb with a mail-in rebate (bulbs purchased at Batteries + Bulbs, or through other promotional discounts, are not eligible for the mail-in rebate). Download the rebate form at dakotaelectric.com.

How to use space heaters efficiently

Generally, it is best to run a space heater when you need to heat just one or two rooms, or if you need temporary heat in a normally hard-to-heat area.

If you are looking to purchase an electric space heater this winter, do your own calculations using the formula below to determine how much running one, two or three in your home would cost.

If a space heater is right for you, consider the following tips:

- If you're using a space heater to heat one or two rooms you use most, turn down your central heating system so you don't heat rooms you aren't using.
- Close doors to rooms that are being heated to avoid heat loss.

- Turn off the heater when not in use or get a space heater with a timer feature.
- Purchase a heater with thermostat settings and use the lowest setting you are comfortable with.
- Select a space heater that is the right size for the space you need to heat; most will have a sizing table on the box.
- And always remember to follow all safety guidelines when operating your space heater. See safety tips on the following page.

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Watts / 1,000} \\ \text{= Kilowatts} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{c} \text{Hours} \\ \text{used per} \\ \text{month} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{c} \$0.12 \\ \text{(kWh rate)} \end{array} = \begin{array}{c} \text{Monthly} \\ \text{Cost} \end{array}$$



Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

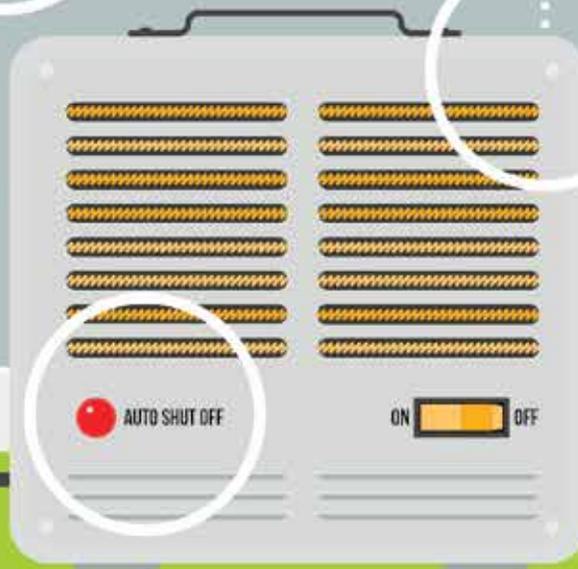
DO: Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.



DO: Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

DO: Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.

DO: Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.



DO: Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.



DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.



DON'T: Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to overheat, and can be a tripping hazard.

DON'T: Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.



DON'T: Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.



DON'T: Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.



Source: NRECA



HOLIDAY LIGHTING SAFETY TIPS



Purchase LED holiday lights; they are cool to the touch and more energy efficient than incandescent bulbs.



Do not overload electrical outlets or extension cords.



Make sure there are no broken bulbs or damaged or frayed cords. Discard any defective strands.



Turn off all indoor/outdoor holiday lighting before leaving the house or going to bed.



Test holiday lights by connecting each strand before hanging them.



Avoid resting bulbs on tree needles and branches. Try using a clip to keep the bulbs upright.



Use holiday lights that include the Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) label.

Source: NRECA

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Happy December SAVINGS

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*On qualifying Trane equipment. Contact Controlled Air for complete details. Offer ends November 30, 2017.

CALL TODAY FOR YOUR FREE IN-HOME ESTIMATE!



Baby it's cold outside

If you are considering electric heat for those hard-to-heat areas, purchase an Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) heating system **between now and Dec. 31, 2017**, and you'll get a \$100/kW rebate. Plus, ETS heating systems can save you between 40-70 percent on your home heating costs without sacrificing the comfort and convenience of a traditional electric heating system. ETS systems take advantage of off-peak electricity, charged at a lower rate since it is consumed when demand is low. In addition, ETS systems require minimal maintenance.

SAVE 40-70% + \$100/kW REBATE

ENERGY WISE MN | Visit EnergyWiseMN.com or call 651-463-6243.



Circuits Quick Clips

Make sure we have your current phone number(s) on file!

When you call in to report an outage, Dakota Electric's automated outage call answering system will check to see if the number you are calling from matches a number in our database.

If a match is found, the system will tell you if dispatchers are aware of your outage and record your telephone number, call time and address location.

If you call from a number that is not recognized in our system database, you will be asked to leave a message, and it will take more time to confirm the affected outage. If you have a landline phone number listed on your account, and you typically use your cell phone to report an outage, please make sure we have your cell phone number listed on your account as well.

Call 651-463-6212 to update the phone number(s) on your account, or update your account online at dakotaelectric.com/member-services.



Please shovel a path to your meter

Reading meters can be dangerous work. An icy and snowy surface can cause life-changing slips, trips and falls.

As the snow flies this winter, please remember to shovel a clear path to your electric meter and make sure your meter is not blocked by snow or ice.

A blocked meter can result in injury to Dakota Electric staff, or an estimated bill if the meter reader cannot access your meter to read it.



'Tis the season for giving Helping Neighbors® helps those in need

Layoffs, medical emergencies, unexpected repairs – all things that could happen to anyone and all things that can leave families struggling to make ends meet. Dakota Electric members who contribute to the Helping Neighbors® trust help local families pay utility bills when facing unexpected financial struggles.

Dakota Electric distributes Helping Neighbors funds to the local CAP Agency, Salvation Army and 360 Communities, which provide utility assistance to families experiencing hardship.

Please consider making a donation. Monthly donations can be added to your electric bill or you can make a one-time contribution.

To learn more, contact Member Services at 651-463-6212 or sign up at dakotaelectric.com/community and click on Helping Neighbors.



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Greg Miller, President & CEO
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4300 220th Street West
Farmington, MN 55024
651-463-6212
www.dakotaelectric.com

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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
customerservice@dakotaelectric.com



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

*In observance of the Christmas and New Year's holidays, our office will be closed Monday, Dec. 25,
Tuesday, Dec. 26 and Monday, Jan. 1. Our system control center is staffed 24 hours a day,
seven days a week, and crews are ready to respond to outages and emergencies.*