

# CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC® MEMBERS



## Dakota Electric sponsors successful EV Ride & Drive

Interest in electric vehicles continues to grow, and it was certainly evident at Dakota Electric's Ride & Drive event on Sept. 12 at Buck Hill Ski Area.

More than 100 members showed up to test drive various electric vehicles and learn more about the benefits and economics associated with owning an EV.

"I am very pleased with how it turned out," said Stephanie Pederson, Dakota Electric energy services representative who helped coordinate the event. "People seemed really interested in the vehicles and were impressed with the smooth, quiet ride, the quick acceleration and regenerative braking that an electric vehicle provides."

Pederson said in honor of National Drive Electric Week (Sept. 8-16), the cooperative wanted to do something to promote EVs and give the members a convenient, interactive and hands-on experience with various makes and models.

Eleven EVs were available to test drive including BMW, Tesla, Mitsubishi, Mini Cooper, Chrysler, Nissan, Volvo and Dakota Electric's Chevy Bolt.

"The Tesla vehicles were certainly the most popular," Pederson said. "But several people told me they were pleasantly surprised with the features and performance of the more economical vehicles and felt they were very

similar to the high-cost versions."

Dakota Electric would like to thank its partners for helping make this event possible, including Drive Electric MN, the American Lung Association, Great River Energy, MN Plug-In Vehicle Owners Circle, local dealerships and the Dakota Electric members who brought their EVs for display.

If you are interested in buying an electric vehicle, visit [dakotaelectric.com](http://dakotaelectric.com) or call 651-463-6243 to learn more about our EV charging programs and \$500 charger installation incentive.

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### Upcoming events

Cold Weather Rule begins . . . . .	Oct. 15
Commercial Member Workshop . . . .	Oct. 25
Board Meeting . . . . .	Oct. 25, 8:30 a.m.

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October 2018



## Local, trusted, serving you

### Q&A with Kim Helleeson, call center supervisor

Dakota Electric Association employees live and work in the communities we serve, and we pride ourselves on our commitment to customer service.

When you contact us, you are speaking with someone at our office in Farmington — not a call center hundreds of miles away. We strive to answer the phones promptly. In fact, our average call response time is 36 seconds.

However, there are times when our billing and customer service call center is busier than usual, and we understand it can be frustrating to wait on the line. Our call center supervisor, Kim Helleeson, offers some tips on contacting us.

#### How many member services representatives are there?

Fifteen

#### How many calls does the call

#### center take in a day/month?

On average, approximately 12,700 calls per month plus emails, live chats and in-person visits.

#### Is there a day/time when call volume is higher?

Yes. The beginning and end of the month, Mondays and Fridays and late afternoons are typically when we are the busiest and wait times can be longer.

#### When is the best time to call?

Our call center is open Monday thru Friday, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m., but the best time to call would be Tuesday thru Thursday, late morning (after 10:30 a.m.). If your call is in regards to energy use and efficiency, please contact our Energy Experts® at 651-463-6243.

#### How else can members contact us?



We offer live chat on our website during business hours. Members can also email [customerservice@dakotaelectric.com](mailto:customerservice@dakotaelectric.com), but please allow two business days for a response. And be sure to visit our website at [dakotaelectric.com](http://dakotaelectric.com) where you can pay your bill, find information on our programs and rebates, and report a power outage.

You can also call our outage service center at 651-463-6201 to report a power outage. Our system control center is staffed 24/7 to respond to power outages.

## Look up and out for power lines!

Accidentally contacting a power line can be dangerous, and in some cases, even deadly. Dakota Electric wants to remind you to stay safe around power lines.

Whether you are playing outdoors with your children, working on landscaping projects, cleaning out your gutters or harvesting the fields, keep a safe distance from power lines and other equipment Dakota Electric uses to get electricity to your home.

- Stay away from power lines, meters, transformers and electrical boxes.
- Don't climb trees near power lines.
- Never fly kites, remote control airplanes or balloons near power lines.
- If you get something stuck in a

power line, call Dakota Electric immediately.

- Keep a safe distance from overhead power lines when working with ladders or installing objects such as antennas.

If you see a downed power line, please stay back and call 651-463-6201 to report it. Never touch or go near anything that may be touching a downed power line. A downed power line may still be an energized line.





## Avoid disconnection this winter

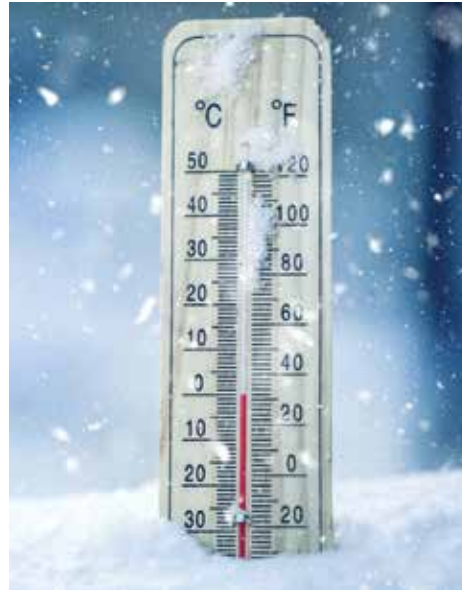
### Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule begins Oct. 15

Members who fall behind on utility bills can avoid disconnection or be eligible for reconnection between Oct. 15 and April 15 by following the steps outlined in Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule.

Members receive a brochure with their September bill statement (mailed between Sept. 12 and Oct. 3) with program details and contact information for agencies that provide utility payment assistance.

The Cold Weather Rule protects members but does not completely forbid shutoffs. Contact Dakota Electric at 651-463-6212 as soon as you anticipate trouble paying a bill, and we can help you create a payment plan to prevent disconnection.

By contacting Dakota Electric and avoiding disconnection, you also avoid paying reconnection fees and a deposit. You must keep your payment plan to qualify for protection.



## Safe at Home

### Address confidentiality program

Safe at Home helps survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and other crimes, and anyone who fears for their safety, by establishing a confidential mailing address and providing a mail forwarding service.

While Dakota Electric needs members' actual addresses to establish and maintain electric service, we use Safe at Home addresses for communicating with members and take special steps to protect Safe at Home participants' addresses.

If you participate in Safe at Home, alert Dakota Electric and provide your Safe at Home mailing address.

To learn more about Safe at Home, contact the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State at [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us) or 1-866-723-3035.



## WHY CHOOSE A CO-OP CAREER?

- Local, community-focused organization
- Dynamic and exciting industry
- Competitive wages and excellent benefits
- Challenging roles where every day is different

*“Having worked at Dakota Electric for nearly 20 years, I know that safety is their absolute priority above all else, which is incredibly important to me, my husband and my two teenagers. Dakota Electric offers the best balance of a wonderful job with good benefits and a busy family life.”*

**- Janet Zimmer**  
Technician Electrician Crew Chief

### Careers in Energy Week is Oct. 15-19.

To learn more about careers in the energy industry, visit [getintoenergy.com](http://getintoenergy.com). Visit [dakotaelectric.com/careers](http://dakotaelectric.com/careers) to explore Dakota Electric job openings.

## BEWARE OF UTILITY SCAMS

Dakota Electric reminds members to beware of any suspicious phone calls demanding 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.

**Never give out social security numbers, credit card or banking information to anyone who calls, regardless of who they claim to represent.**



## Maximize energy savings when you are away from home

If you head south for the winter, or take an extended vacation, keep these tips in mind

**Heating System** Make sure your furnace fan is in "auto" mode and set the thermostat 6-10 degrees lower than the normal setting when you are occupying the home.

**Water Heater** If you have an electric water heater, turn it off at the circuit breaker panel. If you have a gas water heater, set the thermostat to the lowest possible, or "vacation," setting.

**Electronics** Many of today's electronics continue to use electricity even when turned off. To stop all use, unplug printers, computers, cable boxes, TVs and home audio equipment.

**Refrigerator/Freezer** Unplug your refrigerator/freezer after you empty the contents and clean it out. Prop the door open and place an opened box of baking soda on a shelf to absorb odors. If you prefer to leave it plugged in, you can set it to a warmer temperature than usual to save electricity. Just be sure to remove all perishables and consider putting gallon jugs of water inside to reduce temperature swings.

**Home Security** Leave a lamp or two on timers to give your home a lived-in look. Be sure to use high-efficiency LED light bulbs for maximum energy savings.



## WHO POWERS YOU?

Inspired by someone making a difference in your community?  
Tell their story and they could win a cash prize.

Visit [whopowersyou.com/enter](http://whopowersyou.com/enter) between 10/1/18 and 11/4/18 and submit a photo of your nominee. Then tell us why that person inspires you and how they make a difference in your co-op community.

**\$5,000** GRAND PRIZE  
**\$2,000** SECOND PLACE  
**\$1,500** THIRD PLACE  
**\$500** HONORABLE MENTION



VISIT [WHOWERSYOU.COM](http://WHOWERSYOU.COM) FOR FULL CONTEST RULES

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# A Full House of Energy Savings

## ATTIC

In many homes, attic insulation is one of the easiest, least expensive and most effective ways to reduce your energy use. In colder regions, a properly insulated attic also reduces the chance of ice dams.

## DEN/OFFICE

Plug all electronic gadgets such as phone and laptop chargers, printers, gaming consoles and BluRay players into a power strip with an on/off switch. When not in use, turn the power strip off to eliminate all those energy vampires.



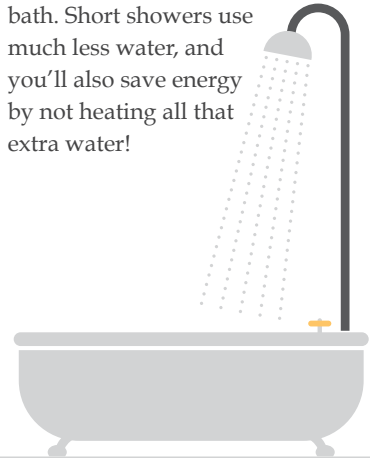
## BEDROOM

Ceiling fans can help save energy all year long! In the summer, fans should rotate counter clockwise to push air down creating a cooling flow. In the winter, fans should rotate clockwise to help draw cool air up toward the ceiling and push the warm air that naturally rises down to you and your family.



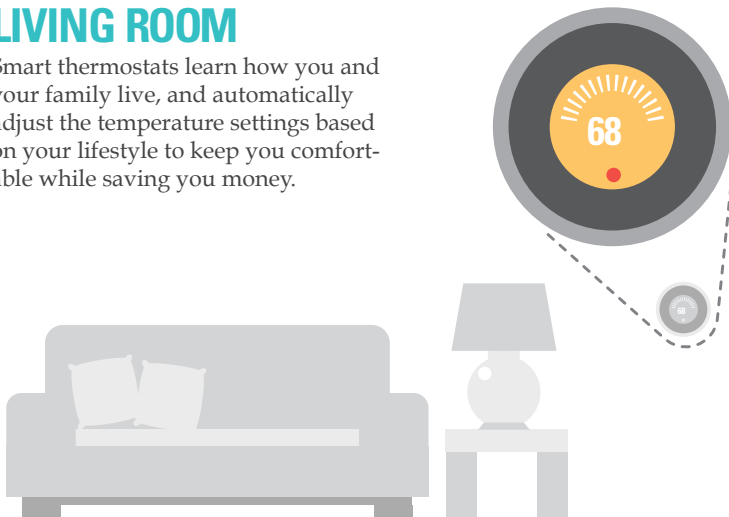
## BATHROOM

Take a short shower instead of a bath. Short showers use much less water, and you'll also save energy by not heating all that extra water!



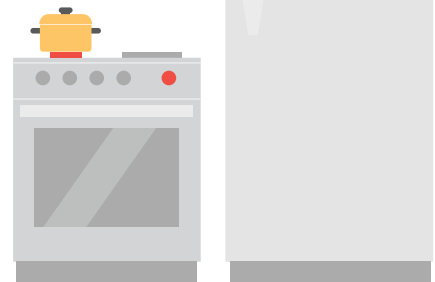
## LIVING ROOM

Smart thermostats learn how you and your family live, and automatically adjust the temperature settings based on your lifestyle to keep you comfortable while saving you money.



## KITCHEN

Make sure your burner isn't bigger than the pan, and use flat-bottomed pans to maximize surface contact with the burner. Don't preheat the oven until you're ready to use it. Minimize the number of times you open and close the refrigerator or oven door.



**Want to learn about additional ways to save energy?**  
**Contact the Energy Experts® at 651-463-6243 or visit**  
**[dakotaelectric.com/save-energy-save-money](http://dakotaelectric.com/save-energy-save-money).**



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVES



# HUGE Pre-Winter Furnace Event on NOW!

Trust a company that has served over 100,000 South Metro homeowners since 1977!

**SAVINGS up to \$1,540\*** on new high efficiency Trane Furnaces!

Save on new Trane A/C's too with end of summer discounts!

\*Combination of Controlled Air discount and utility rebates on select Trane furnaces.

## WHY HAVE AN ANNUAL FURNACE TUNE-UP?

Most important is your safety. A tune up includes a carbon monoxide leak test. Plus, with annual tune-ups, you will extend the life of your furnace, be ready for each heat season, operate at maximum energy savings, and we can discover and repair minor issues BEFORE they become serious.

Contact us today to schedule your Fall Furnace Tune-Up or a FREE in-home estimate!

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\*In-Home Estimate Needed, Offer Expires October 31, 2018

## Download Dakota Electric's FREE Outage App!

**Quick. Easy.  
Informed.**

Once you have installed the app, you must request a code by visiting [dakotaelectric.com](http://dakotaelectric.com) > Power Outages > 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**

# Circuits Quick Clips

## Fifty years and still going strong

For a guy who has worked in the same place for 50 years, it might go without saying: He enjoys his work and the people with whom he works. That is certainly a helpful component of a five-decade career.

Greg Klotz, transportation superintendent, celebrated 50 years of service at Dakota Electric last month. He began working for the cooperative in 1968 as a meter reader and worked his way into the shop as a mechanic.

Klotz says he will retire some day, but for now he still enjoys coming to work every day. "I feel good, I enjoy what I do, and I enjoy the people I work with," he said.



*Congratulations on your milestone achievement, Greg!*

## 360 Communities donation receives \$10,000 from Dakota Electric, CoBank



Dakota Electric Association, along with its lender, CoBank, recently donated \$10,000 to 360 Communities. Dakota Electric's \$5,000 donation was matched by CoBank through the company's "Sharing Success" grant program. 360 Communities provides assistance to about 17,000 individuals each year with a variety of programs throughout the area, including domestic violence shelters, resource centers, food shelves and more. This is the sixth year that Dakota Electric's donation was doubled through CoBank's grant program.

Pictured (L-R): Dakota Electric board members Bill Holton and Chair David Jones; 360 Communities CEO Jeff Mortensen; CoBank's Cliff Bolstad; 360 Communities Development Director Laurie Bolin; and Dakota Electric board members Paul Trapp and Jim Sheldon.

## Apply for the 2018 Touchstone Energy Community Award

The Touchstone Energy Community Award allows Dakota Electric to recognize and support local businesses, non-profit organizations and community needs.

In 2018, Dakota Electric will provide up to three awards to local organizations, earning each winner a \$500 cash prize. One local award winner will compete for a statewide award of \$1,000.

### How to apply

The application deadline is Nov. 1, 2018.

Call Brenda at 651-463-6234 or visit [dakotaelectric.com/community](http://dakotaelectric.com/community) for an application and judging criteria.



2017 award recipients: Winner - The Open Door; Runners Up - Military Family Support Group and DARTS



## Board of Directors

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power your life.**

## 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/  
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[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.

**OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH**