

JANUARY 2019

CIRCUITS

FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS



3
ENERGY EFFICIENCY
8 tips every homeowner
should try

4
COMMUNITY
PawPADs, 2018 Touchstone Energy
Community Award Winner

6
CO-OP CORNER
2019 Youth Tour
application

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

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Dakota Electric Association

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Hello!

From Your President and CEO

Welcome to the new edition of *Circuits* newsletter! We are kicking off the new year with a redesigned version of *Circuits* in an effort to continually engage our evolving membership.

This new format will resemble a magazine-style publication featuring quick and easy reads relating to energy efficiency, technology, community features, co-op news and electric safety. With the use of more infographics and visuals, we hope you find the information useful and appealing.

According to recent surveys, *Circuits* has a high readership level among our members. But we also know that 27 percent of members prefer to receive *Circuits* digitally.

That's why we have redesigned the online version as well. For those of you who wish to receive it electronically, you can subscribe online at dakotaelectric.com.

It's a new year, and that means new resolutions. Whether this is the first year you're looking for ways to save energy or you want

to lower your energy bills even more than last year, check out our eight strategies for saving energy on page 3.

Regardless of your interests, we hope you find a valuable takeaway or two in each issue of this newsletter. We exist to serve you, our members, and to help you make informed energy decisions.

We are a community-focused organization working to safely and efficiently deliver affordable and reliable energy. We were built by the communities we serve, we belong to the communities we serve, and we are led by members like you.

As always, feel free to drop us a note and let us know what you think. We value your ideas and feedback.

Happy New Year!

— **GREG MILLER**

Dakota Electric Association President & CEO

ON THE COVER: PAWPADS FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LINDA BALL, AND TORY, ONE OF THE ORGANIZATION'S SERVICE DOGS AND OFFICIAL AMBASSADOR.



SAVING ENERGY *Saves money*

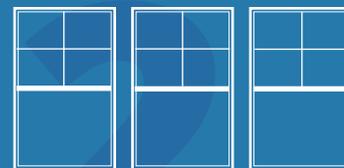
Source: Energy.gov

New year, new resolutions. Resolve to save energy and money at home.

Check out the eight things all homeowners should do to cost effectively lower their energy bills.



Install and set a programmable thermostat and save an estimated 10 percent a year on heating and cooling costs.



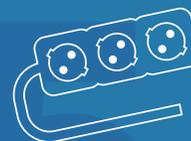
Use sunlight to your advantage. Choose window treatments that allow you to use natural light while reducing heat loss and gain.



Switch to ENERGY STAR® appliances, fans and electronics. Using ENERGY STAR certified products throughout your home could save nearly \$900 over the lifetime of the products.



Choose energy-saving lighting. Replacing 15 traditional bulbs with energy-saving LEDs will save you \$50 a year and more than \$600 in energy costs over the life of the bulbs.



Use an electronic power strip for your electronic equipment. Help reduce phantom loads — and save up to \$100 a year — by plugging electronic devices into a power strip and turning it off when not in use.



Hire a professional to maintain your heating and cooling system. Check and replace your air filters regularly and arrange for annual maintenance with a qualified technician.



Reduce energy for water heating. Take simple steps — like lowering your water heater's temperature and installing low-flow showerheads — to reduce your water heating bills.



Consult the Energy Experts® at Dakota Electric for advice on saving energy. They can answer your questions, offer tips and suggestions and, in some instances, provide a free home energy audit. Call 651-463-6243.

How much energy are you really using?

Now that the holidays are behind us, are you curious to know how much energy your new appliances and electronics may be using? There's an easy way to find out! Dakota Electric provides 27 Kill A Watt™ meters through Dakota County's library system. Members may check out a meter to measure power consumption of appliances and electronics to determine the actual cost of power consumed. Simply follow the instructions and plug the meter into a regular 120-volt outlet and plug an appliance into the meter. The unit will project the cost of continued use of an appliance in time periods of hour, day, week, month and year.





PawPADs

2018 Touchstone Energy Community Award Winner

In December, Dakota Electric awarded PawPADs with the 2018 Touchstone Energy Community Award, which recognizes the efforts of nonprofit groups, community organizations and businesses who have shown a strong commitment to their community. PawPADs received a check for \$500 from Dakota Electric and will go on to contend against other award winners from across the state for a cash prize of \$1,000. Majestic Hills Ranch (Lakeville) and Bundles of Love (Burnsville) were runners up and also received \$500.

Linda Ball is visibly moved when she tells the story of an assault victim who met with a prosecutor to discuss a criminal case. While speaking about her experience, the girl was uncomfortable and began shutting down. Ranger, a victim support dog, was at her side. Sensing the need, Ranger laid his head on her shoulder and left it there until she became comfortable enough to continue, creating an environment where it was safe to do so. Ranger's presence offered the victim validation, security and healing.

Ranger is one of many dogs trained by Pawsitive Perspectives Assistance Dogs (PawPADs), a nonprofit organization with a dual mission to enrich the lives of people with disabilities by providing them with exceptionally skilled assistance dogs; and to utilize the power of the human-canine bond as a therapeutic, educational, healing tool.

The human-canine bond is a very powerful thing. Ball, founder and executive director of PawPADs has witnessed first-hand how that special bond has impacted not only her clients who receive the assistance dogs, but also the people who train them.

She and her husband, Randy Patrick, run the business on their 14-acre property outside of Lakeville. They have developed positive reinforcement training programs that offer volunteers, university students, veterans, prison inmates and at-risk youth the opportunity to help raise and train the canines.

Ball acknowledges that working with the dogs can have an impact on everyone, but it is especially true for veterans with PTSD, inmates and at-risk youth who, through training, often learn or re-learn self control, emotional regulation, parenting skills, communication skills, patience and responsibility.

"It is amazing to see the impact these dogs have on them and how they communicate," Ball said. "It really changes them in such a positive way."

Once trained and ready, the dogs are placed as service dogs for wounded warriors, children and adults with diabetes, and persons with physical mobility challenges.

The dogs typically come to PawPADs as puppies either from rescue organizations or purpose breeders. Over an approximately two-year period, young service dogs in-training must pass high standards of health, behavior, obedience and skills training in order to be placed. In addition, diabetic alert dogs must also be trained to detect and alert to the changing blood sugar levels in Type 1 diabetics.

Ball acknowledges that some dogs just aren't cut out for the "work" due to a variety of reasons such as too social, a health issue or a high prey drive. Those dogs often become facility dogs used for therapy or companionship.

In fact, she says they are getting more and more requests for facility dogs. "People are seeing the benefits of having dogs in schools, courthouses, funeral homes, nursing homes and other places," she said.

The first dog placed through PawPADs is at a VA home in Hastings. They also have a number of school resource dogs at various elementary and middle schools in the Lakeville School District, and most recently, they partnered with 360 Communities to place Ranger, the state's first victim support dog, in the Dakota County court system. They also placed Coco, another victim support dog, with the Lakeville Police Department.

Ball says the recent story of Ranger and the countless others are what keeps them going.

"We sometimes get mired in the care of these dogs; the chores, picking up poop, working seven days a week, fundraising and everything else," she said. "And then we get a note from a father who says, thanks to their diabetic alert dog, they were awakened in the middle of the night when their son's blood sugars dropped; or a phone call from a former prison inmate who thanks us and tells us what a life-changing impact the prison's facility dog had on him; and we are reminded of why we do what we do."



The Assistance Dogs Education Program and Training (ADEPT) is an innovative intern partnership between PawPADs and the University of Wisconsin River Falls. Students are responsible for the training and socialization of the assistance dogs, which includes a high level of obedience skills and task training such as turning on lights, retrieving, alerting to blood sugar changes and tugging open doors. Every student is responsible for the daily care, supervision, training and sanitation of the dogs involved in the program.



2018 Touchstone Energy Community Award winner PawPADs and runners-up, Majestic Hills Ranch and Bundles of Love. In front (L-R): Linda Ball and Tory (PawPADs); Larry Johnson (Majestic Hills); Christa Ragatz and Mary Jo Prinsen (Bundles of Love). In back (L-R): Dakota Electric board members Jim Sheldon, Paul Trapp, Bill Holton and David Jones.

In addition to Ball and Patrick, PawPADs employs one other full-time staff member and has nearly 25 volunteers. Their funding relies primarily on individual and corporate contributions, fundraisers, gifts in-kind and grants.

"That's why support from organizations like Dakota Electric is so important to us," said Patrick. "We aren't a huge operation, and we don't strive to be. Because our mission is two-fold, we are just as much about the process and experience of the training as we are about the placement."



YOUTH TOUR 2019

Juniors & Seniors: Applications now being accepted

Dakota Electric will send five local high school juniors or seniors on an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. June 15-20 as part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Youth Tour.

Sponsored by the nation's electric cooperatives since 1958, the NRECA Youth Tour is designed to build leadership skills while educating young people about the cooperative business model and American history and government.



Visit historic monuments and museums.



Meet with your U.S. Representatives and Senators.



Join hundreds of young people from across the U.S.



Boost your community service and engagement.

“This was such an incredible experience and will be one of the most memorable weeks of my life.”

Emily Hull, Eagan High School
2018 Youth Tour participant



TO APPLY, VISIT DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM/COMMUNITY/EDUCATION-PROGRAMS OR REQUEST AN APPLICATION FROM YOUR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR. **APPLICATION DEADLINE IS FEB. 21.** STUDENTS MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR AN IN-PERSON INTERVIEW ON MARCH 14 OR 19. APPLICANT'S HOUSEHOLD MUST BE A MEMBER OF DAKOTA ELECTRIC.

DAKOTA CARES

Dakota Electric employees raise more than \$30,000 for charity



Last year, Dakota Electric and its employees held a variety of fundraising events and a pledge drive to raise money for three charities: **United Way (\$7,775), Community Health Charities (\$15,683) and the Fallen Linemen Organization (\$8,156).** Activities included a fun shoot, silent auctions, fajita feed, and a pork chop feed.



Dakota Cares Committee (L-R): Julie Simonsen, Bernie Kolnberger, Susan Strong, Corey Willert, Mel Belschner, Cherry Jordan, Dave Reinke and Tom Riste.

Your Electricity 2018 brochure available

The most recent information on how the electric generation, transmission and distribution systems work, plus the sources, costs and emissions of fuels used in meeting the needs of Dakota Electric's members, is available by visiting dakotaelectric.com/member-services/member-resources. You can also request to have a copy of the brochure mailed to you by calling 651-463-6212.





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UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Board Meeting**
Jan. 31, 8:30 a.m.

dakotaelectric.com/event-calendar

**NEW YEAR,
NEW LOOK!**



**Check out
what's inside!**

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