

NOVEMBER 2020

# CIRCUITS

FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS



**Could Rolling  
Blackouts  
Happen Here?**  
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Protect yourself  
from scammers.

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Sales tax exemptions and  
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## 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 Temporarily Closed

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*

**Dakotaelectric.com**

**customerservice@dakotaelectric.com**

*Dakota Electric Association® and Dakota Electric®  
are registered service marks of the cooperative.*

*All programs and rebates are subject to change  
without notice. Funds are limited and available  
on a first-come, first-served basis.*

## Dakota Electric Association

# BOARD of Directors

### DISTRICT 1

John (Jack) DeYoe

David Jones

Gerald F. Pittman | *Chair*

### DISTRICT 2

Bill Middlecamp

Jim Sheldon | *Treasurer*

Clay Van De Bogart | *GRE Director*

### DISTRICT 3

Kenneth H. Danner | *Secretary*

William F. Holton

Margaret D. Schreiner | *GRE Director*

### DISTRICT 4

Paul Bakken | *Vice Chair*

Judy H. Kimmes

Stacy Miller | *MREA Director*



# Grid Resiliency

**Could rolling blackouts  
happen here?**

**A record-breaking heat wave hit California in August, causing the state's three biggest utilities to cut power to hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses for about an hour at a time until the emergency declaration ended a few hours later.**

These rolling blackouts — the first California experienced in nearly 20 years — made headlines and sparked questions across the country. Dakota Electric and its power supplier, Great River Energy, are receiving the same question, “Could this happen here?”

Unlike California, most utilities in Minnesota are part of a large and geographically diverse energy market coordinated by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). MISO is responsible for transmission planning and generation dispatch across a 15-state region. The generating resources in the MISO energy market reflect a wide variety of fuel sources that work together to provide you with safe and reliable power. Great River Energy has been a MISO market participant since its establishment in 2005.

In addition to energy markets, MISO is responsible for overall system reliability and guidelines. These rules, which every utility in MISO must follow, ensure the grid has enough resources for everyone. As a MISO market participant, Great River Energy must have enough

generating capacity to supply Dakota Electric's energy demands plus a reserve margin.

“We have a fleet of modern natural gas plants in Minnesota that provide all-hours reliability,” said Great River Energy President & CEO David Saggau. “Most of these plants have on-site backup fuels. Additionally, we have built new transmission across the region to ensure energy can be delivered to our members. And, in partnership with our member-owner cooperatives, we have developed one of the country's most robust demand response programs, allowing us to effectively reduce electric loads during extreme conditions.”

Rolling blackouts are only used as a last resort by grid operators, so MISO works aggressively with Great River Energy to maintain a resilient electric grid for Dakota Electric.

Grid resiliency is many things — it's the reliability of your electric service, it's our ability to quickly and efficiently restore your power, it's being able to meet the demands of new technologies and it's how we serve you with various generation sources without skipping a beat. Resiliency is a 24/7, year-round task.

**– GREG MILLER**

*Dakota Electric Association, President & CEO*

# Monitoring the Line for Reliability

Electric co-ops use a variety of monitoring and automation technologies that improve power reliability, shorten outage times and reduce labor time for crews. Here are four technologies we use to improve reliability.



## Drones

Drones may be used to inspect the power lines we maintain. Drones can provide infrared evaluation to locate hot spots on power lines and for vegetation assessment to locate trees and other vegetation that can cause outages.

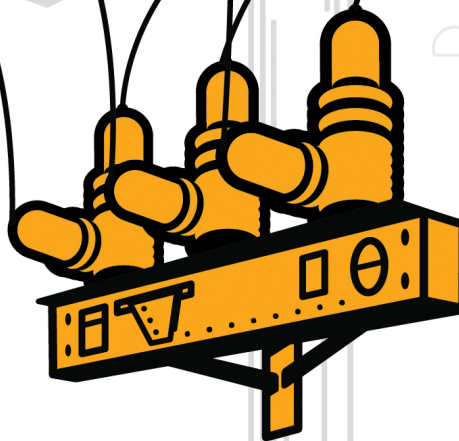
## Fault Indicators

Fault indicators typically clamp on or connect to the power line and provide an indication of where problems exist locally. This helps to provide more reliable energy to members.



## AMI

Advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) provides real-time data to the co-op. In addition to meter reading, this data helps us detect faults and other potential problems on the electrical system, resulting in increased power reliability for consumer-members.



## Reclosers

A recloser acts like a circuit breaker for power lines. When a problem occurs, the recloser temporarily shuts off power. If the problem is temporary, the recloser restores power automatically. (This is why you sometimes see the power blink.) If the problem persists, the recloser will shut off power until a crew can make repairs. The recloser's antenna provides wireless, real-time data back to the co-op.

Source: NRECA



# UTILITY SCAM AWARENESS

Utility scams are common because of the vast number of utilities that exist, plus consumers are understandably anxious with the threat of disruption to their electric, heating or water service. Protect yourself by being aware of common utility scams. If you are ever contacted by a person or company you can't verify, hang up and call Dakota Electric at 651-463-6212 or email [customerservice@dakotaelectric.com](mailto:customerservice@dakotaelectric.com) for more information.



## DISCONNECTION DECEPTION

Scammers call threatening disconnection of your utility service, demanding immediate payment by prepaid cards.



## POWER RESTORATION CHARGE

Scammers call offering to restore power more quickly for a fee in the aftermath of severe storms causing widespread power outages.



## OVERPAYMENT TACTIC

Scammers call claiming you have overpaid your utility bill, and you need to provide personal bank account information or a credit card number to facilitate a refund.



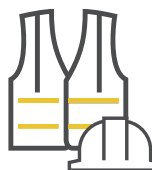
## IDENTIFICATION ATTACK

Rather than directing victims to call a 1-800 number, the scammers direct the caller to press 1 to collect more data in an effort to get personally identifiable information.



## VACATE YOUR HOME

Scammers claim there is a need to replace equipment and you must leave your home for 72 hours. Dakota Electric will never tell you to leave your house to replace equipment.



## DOOR KNOCKING IMPOSTOR

Door-to-door impostors pose as utility workers to gain entry or access into unsuspecting victims' homes. Our workers will always wear Dakota Electric vests or logoed clothing and won't enter your home unless you previously scheduled an appointment for us to do so.



## FACEBOOK CHARITY SCAM

Social media posts are telling customers that a charity will pay for their utility bills if the customer first makes a partial payment by money transfer. This new scam is still under investigation by authorities, and it is unclear if the scammers are seeking money, personally identifiable information, or both.

# Solar awareness

The energy industry is undergoing rapid change, and technology is paving the way for innovation in the way energy is used, produced, stored and shared. While the changing energy market has created more options for members, it has also resulted in more utility scams and misleading information surrounding solar installations in particular.

1

## DO YOUR RESEARCH



Research the best steps to take before investing in a solar system. [MNCerts.org](https://mncerts.org) and [CleanEnergyProjectBuilder.org](https://cleanenergyprojectbuilder.org) can provide you with best solar installation practices and connect you with companies that can help you plan, implement and manage your projects.

2

## CHOOSE A REPUTABLE CONTRACTOR



Create a list of contractors from your research. Receive at least three bids and request copies of insurance documents, certifications and licenses, so you know that the contractor and installers have gone through required training. If possible, ask a contract specialist or lawyer to review the contract before signing.

3

## CONTACT DAKOTA ELECTRIC



We will work with you and your contractor to apply for interconnection. Using our NOVA Power Portal you can find the required documentation, learn about the process and technical procedures and check the status of your project. We also provide a performance-based solar rebate program. Contact our Energy Experts® for more information.

4

## MAINTAIN GOOD RECORDS



Keep files on all your research and data, as well as bids, contracts, inspection reports, maintenance records and all other details you may need to refer to in the future. If you are contacted by a person or company you can't verify, hang up and call Dakota Electric or the solar company that installed your system.

Most solar companies that do business in our area are legitimate; however, new products and services in the energy industry give scammers the opportunity to spread misleading information.

More of our members are informing us they've been told misleading information regarding solar installations in our service area. Homeowners have seen an ad online — often on social media — or had someone come to their door claiming to partner with Dakota Electric on rooftop solar installations. Dakota Electric does not have a special partnership with any solar companies. That said, we will work with solar contractors who submit an interconnection application and proper documentation on behalf of a member.

Additionally, homeowners with rooftop solar may receive a sales call offering an accessory, upgrade or extended warranty to their solar array. These calls may be from scammers who claim to represent a solar company and promise to replace faulty or broken parts. Again, if you do not expect a call, don't be fooled. Calls offering misleading information could be a potential scam. Please call Dakota Electric or the solar company that installed your solar array if you think there may be a problem.

If you are considering solar for your home, make sure you work with a reputable company. There are a variety of solar contractors that offer a wide array of products as well as financing models. The Minnesota Department of Commerce recommends getting at least three or more quotes before making a final decision. View [CleanEnergyProjectBuilder.org](https://cleanenergyprojectbuilder.org) or [MNCerts.org](https://mncerts.org) for more information.

To learn more about Dakota Electric's solar interconnection process, or for help on making an informed decision, please contact our Energy Experts® at **651-463-6243** or email [energyexperts@dakotaelectric.com](mailto:energyexperts@dakotaelectric.com).



# ENERGY ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

**This year has been difficult for many of our commercial and residential members. We recognize that Dakota Electric Association is a critical service and that we play an important role as we keep the lights on for you, our members. We also recognize that many of our members may be experiencing financial difficulties during these unusual times.**

To help members impacted by COVID-19, we're working with those hardest hit to make special payment arrangements. In addition to members working closely with us, the Community Action Partnership of Scott, Carver and Dakota counties (CAP Agency) is a local nonprofit organization that works to stabilize individuals and families experiencing crisis. CAP Agency's Energy Assistance Program (EAP) helps eligible households maintain affordable, continuous and safe home energy. Services include bill payment assistance, home energy crisis intervention, outreach, energy advocacy, information about utility consumer rights and referrals.

Households must apply by May 31, 2021, to receive assistance. Individuals must occupy the residence for which the energy assistance benefits are being

applied and meet the household income guidelines. You can apply for this program if you are income eligible for energy assistance. To apply for the Energy Assistance Program, visit [capagency.org](https://capagency.org) or call **651-322-3500** for an application.

It is important that you reach out to us if you are unable to pay your bill. We will work with you to establish a payment plan for your account. Our member services staff are available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at **651-463-6212** or **1-800-874-3409**, or email [customerservice@dakotaelectric.com](mailto:customerservice@dakotaelectric.com).

Household Size	Annual Income	Three Month Income
1	\$ 28,266	\$ 7,066
2	\$ 36,963	\$ 9,240
3	\$ 45,660	\$ 11,415
4	\$ 54,357	\$ 13,589
5	\$ 63,054	\$ 15,763
6	\$ 71,751	\$ 17,937
7	\$ 73,382	\$ 18,345
8	\$ 75,013	\$ 18,753

## Other Energy Assistance Resources Available

**Scott-Carver-Dakota CAP Agency** | 651-322-3500  
2496 145th St. W., Rosemount, MN 55068

**360 Communities** | 952-985-5300  
501 East Highway 13, Suite 112, Burnsville, MN 55337

**Dakota County Economic Assistance** | 651-554-5611  
1 Mendota Road W., Suite 100, West St. Paul, MN 55118

**Goodhue County Health & Human Services**  
651-385-3200 | 426 West Ave., Red Wing, MN 55066

**Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.** | 507-316-0610  
1414 North Star Dr., Zumbrota, MN 55992

**Rice County Social Services** | 507-332-6115  
320 3rd St. NW., Faribault, MN 55021

**Scott County Human Services** | 952-445-7751  
200 4th Ave. W., Shakopee, MN 55379



# BOARD ELECTION INFORMATION

## Do you want to serve on Dakota Electric's Nominating Committee?

Dakota Electric Association is requesting member volunteers to serve on the Nominating Committee for the board of directors election. Members who desire to serve should email Melissa Cherney at [mcherney@dakotaelectric.com](mailto:mcherney@dakotaelectric.com) or call **651-463-6252**. Requests must be received by 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 7, 2020. Volunteer members are drawn by lot for each district (two members from each district and one alternate from each district). Members will be notified of their selection on or about Jan. 6, 2021.

The Nominating Committee will meet late afternoon/evening on Jan. 26, 2021 (or alternate date of Feb. 9), to interview candidates.

## Deadline for board candidates is Dec. 7

The following incumbent directors are seeking reelection to the board of directors at Dakota Electric Association's annual meeting on April 29, 2021: Jerry Pittman in District 1, Clay Van De Bogart in District 2, Kenneth Danner in District 3, and Judy Kimmes in District 4. Any member in good standing may seek election for the board of directors in the district in which he/she resides.

Members interested in seeking election for a director seat should request an application from Melissa Cherney at [mcherney@dakotaelectric.com](mailto:mcherney@dakotaelectric.com) or call **651-463-6252**. Completed applications must be received at Dakota Electric's office by 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 7, 2020. Candidate interviews will be conducted the evening of Jan. 26, 2021 (or alternate date of Feb. 9).

## Sales tax exemption for residential electric heat

A tax exemption is available for the months of November through April if you heat your home primarily with electricity. To determine eligibility, see the Minnesota Department of Revenue Sales Tax Fact Sheet 157 at [www.revenue.state.mn.us](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us).

If you have questions regarding your eligibility for sales tax exemptions, please contact the Minnesota Department of Revenue at 651-296-6181 or toll free at 1-800-657-3777, or by email at [salesuse.tax@state.mn.us](mailto:salesuse.tax@state.mn.us).



TO APPLY FOR A SALES TAX EXEMPTION FOR RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC HEAT DOWNLOAD THE FORM HERE:  
[WWW.DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM](http://WWW.DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM) > [PROGRAMS & REBATES](#)

## Seasonal charging time update

The charging time for electric-thermal storage (ETS) heating appliances and ETS water heaters has changed from 11 p.m. through 7 a.m. to a new time of 10 p.m. through 6 a.m. Electric vehicles on the storage program are not affected by this change. For questions, email [energyexperts@dakotaelectric.com](mailto:energyexperts@dakotaelectric.com) or call 651-463-6243.



Your Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperative

4300 220th Street West  
Farmington, MN 55024

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Board Meeting**  
Nov. 19, 8:30 a.m.  
Board meetings are  
being held virtually.
- **Office Closed**  
Nov. 26-27

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## CONNECT WITH US!



[dakotaelectric.com/event-calendar](https://dakotaelectric.com/event-calendar)

**DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM**

**Office Closed**  
Nov. 26-27

HAPPY  
*Thanksgiving*

**Wishing you and yours a safe and happy holiday!**

Rain or shine, day or night,  
we're here for you — 24/7, year-round.

24-Hour Emergency Service | Local: 651-463-6201 | Toll-Free: 1-800-430-9722

inside  
CIRCUITS  
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For Dakota Electric Members



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