

MAY 2021

CIRCUITS

FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS

**MAY IS
ELECTRICAL
SAFETY MONTH!**
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**DAKOTA
ELECTRIC**
ASSOCIATION
Your Touchstone Energy
Cooperative

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reliable electric system

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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*

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Stacy Miller | *MREA Director*

Electric Reliability

How your cooperative maintains a safe and reliable electric system

After the February power failures in Texas, Dakota Electric members may be concerned about the reliability of their electricity. Rest assured, your electric cooperative is more than prepared. Our focus on planning, proactive maintenance and investment in infrastructure improves our ability to deliver power to you, our member-owners, no matter the circumstances.

Each year, Dakota Electric provides the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission with a Safety, Reliability and Service Quality (SRSQ) internal audit report. The report evaluates our reliability, safety performance and service levels in comparison to previous years. Based on that report, Dakota Electric makes plans for system maintenance and investments. As a result, our reliability numbers continue to be among the best in the nation, ranked in the top ten percentile.

Recent residential growth and large commercial developments in and around Dakota County call for an increase in electric capacity from Dakota Electric. Last year, a number of substation upgrades were performed. The Burnscott substation in Burnsville received a new transformer, and the Lebanon Hills substation in Eagan was completely rebuilt and converted from a voltage of 69kv to a more robust 115kv.

We also added a new substation in Inver Grove Heights to meet the increasing demand for electric capacity in that area. The Barnes Grove substation is expected to come online this spring.

In addition to substation work, we continue to replace aging infrastructure, install advanced meters and update our equipment and technology. We plan to design, stake and build electric services to over 1,000 new homes and businesses this year, and install approximately 100 miles of electric line to feed new services.

Lastly, we address the worst performing feeders on an annual basis to improve reliability in areas experiencing the most frequent outages. In 2020, we found one utility pole was affected by four separate vehicle accidents, causing power outages for our members. In January, a minor reconfiguration project was completed to convert a portion of the overhead line where the pole was located with underground line to reduce outages and avoid the potential for future incidents.

Avoiding catastrophic outages and rolling blackouts like Texas endured is a combined effort between Dakota Electric and our power supplier, Great River Energy, who operates an exceptional fleet of generation and transmission assets on our behalf.

We work hard to ensure rates remain affordable for our members, and though equipment replacement and construction is expensive, our excellent reliability numbers show that these expenses make the system more reliable for you. We value your trust and will continue to invest your dollars wisely to ensure superior reliability, member services, effective environmental and conservation programs and outstanding safety.

A DAY IN MAY



It was an average Illinois day in May — one that started like any other, when Cody Conrady was at work for an ag fertilizer company.

He was an assistant manager, and it was his next-to-last day on the job. They were understaffed that day, and Cody was filling in wherever he was needed.

He jumped in the truck to try and get ahead of the sprayer. Once the sprayer was in position, he hopped out to fill the tank with fertilizer.

He and his coworker inside the cab were unaware that the sprayer boom had either made contact or gotten too close to a power line.

7,400 volts of electricity traveled through the boom and electrified the equipment and ground where Cody was standing. Unfortunately, the electricity considered Cody's body as part of its path to ground.

Since that day, Cody and Bailey began a tough road of recovery, together. For him, it was true grit, determination and living the ups and downs that come with this type of recovery. For her, it was emotional strength and fortitude — witnessing Cody's setbacks and victories and supporting him through them all.

Cody took his first steps as part of his recovery four months later — days before their September wedding. Cody and Bailey share their experiences to increase awareness about power line safety.

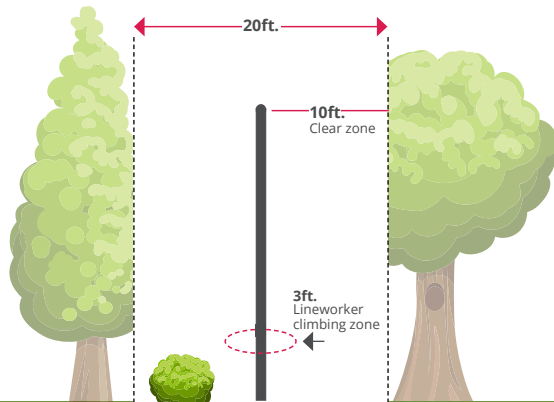
Electricity can travel through anything in its path. Unintended contact can happen in an instant.

Source: safeelectricity.org

WATCH CODY'S FULL STORY ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL:
[YOUTUBE.COM/USER/DAKOTAELECTRIC](https://www.youtube.com/user/dakotaelectric)

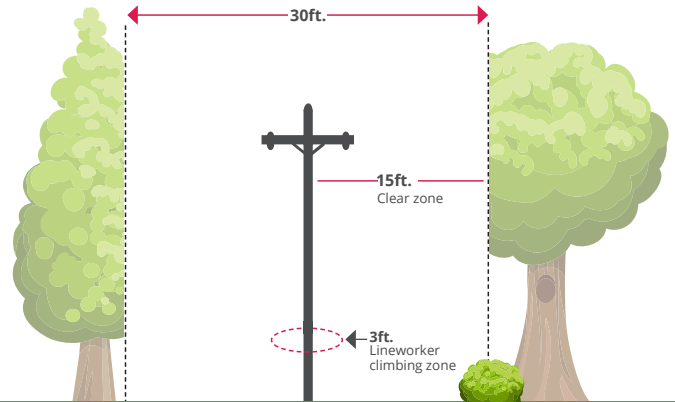
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Many power outages are caused by trees and limbs falling on power lines during bad weather, interrupting the continuous electrical service our members have come to expect. In 2020, Dakota Electric embarked on a five-year vegetation management plan allowing us to spot potential issues ahead of time, perform line maintenance and provide safe and reliable electric service to our members. We maintain power line clearance by following the guidelines below.



Single phase overhead distribution power line

Dakota Electric strives to obtain an area of 20 feet for single phase overhead power lines or 10 feet from any open wire power line.



Three phase overhead distribution power line

Dakota Electric strives to obtain an area of 30 feet for three phase overhead power lines or 15 feet from any open wire power line.

Dakota Electric's vegetation management process includes:

- Planned maintenance – including tree pruning or felling.
- Reactive pruning – trimming vegetation with a high or demonstrated risk of interference with power lines.
- Felling trees – cutting down trees inside or outside the right of way that are discovered to be at risk of falling on or otherwise threatening power lines.
- Mowing – maintaining the ground below the right of way.
- Herbicide application – stumps cut to a height of 3 inches or less with an EPA-registered and -approved herbicide applied to control vegetation.

When will tree crews come to my property?

Members are notified six-to-eight weeks before Dakota Electric begins pruning or removing trees in their area. Timing for scheduled maintenance projects depends on the size of the trimming area, workload for the crew and the weather. If you contact tree management to report a tree in the lines affecting your service, Dakota Electric will do its best to resolve the issue as quickly and safely as possible. For more information, or to submit a request to tree management, follow the link on page five and choose "Contact Tree Management."

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

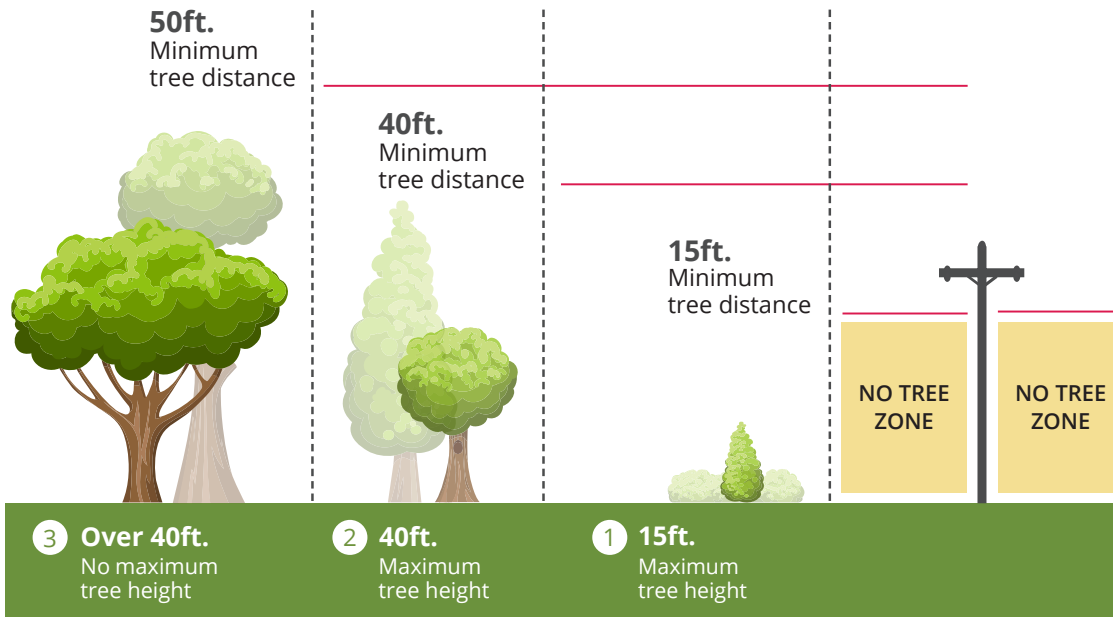
If you are planning a building or landscaping project, **always call 811 before you dig**. State and federal laws require marking all underground utilities before any excavation. Regardless of where you are building or planting, call Gopher State One Call to request a locate several days before digging. Call 811 or 1-800-252-1166, or visit www.gopherstateonecall.org. Facility marks are valid for 14 calendar days.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

PLANTING GUIDELINES

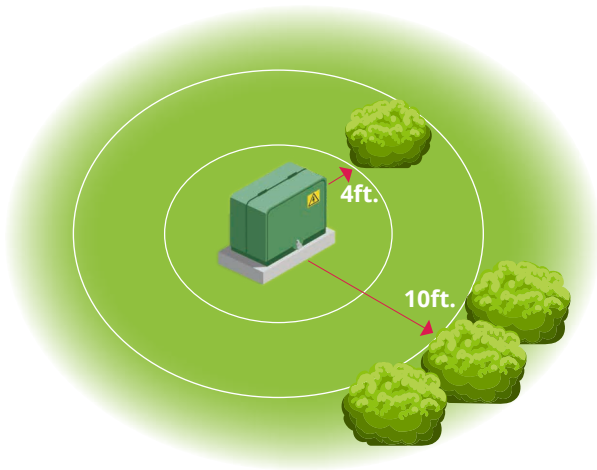
Landscaping is a great way to increase the value of your property and save energy, but trees and shrubs planted too close to power lines and other electrical equipment can create both safety and reliability concerns. You can help maintain power line access and clearance by planning ahead before planting trees and shrubs. These guidelines help ensure a safe and reliable service for all Dakota Electric members.



Quick Tip!

Please do not landscape or install fences near the cooperative's pad mount transformers, junction boxes or at the base of power poles. Our crews need plenty of space to access this equipment. Thank you for your cooperation.

Pad mount transformers



Mature trees, shrubs and plants need to maintain 10 feet of clearance in front of doors and four feet on all other sides of the box.

1 Trees under 15 feet

Trees that grow no taller than 15 feet may be planted 15 feet from the electrical wires, but no closer.

2 Trees under 40 feet

Trees that grow no taller than 40 feet may be planted 40 feet from the electrical wires, but no closer.

3 Trees over 40 feet

Trees that grow over 40 feet must be planted at least 50 feet from the electrical wires and no closer than 35 feet from buildings to allow proper root development and minimize root damage to buildings.

LEARN MORE ABOUT TREE TRIMMING AND PLANTING BY VISITING: [DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM](https://dakotaelectric.com) > MEMBER SERVICES > TREES & POWER LINES



REBATES & OFFERS

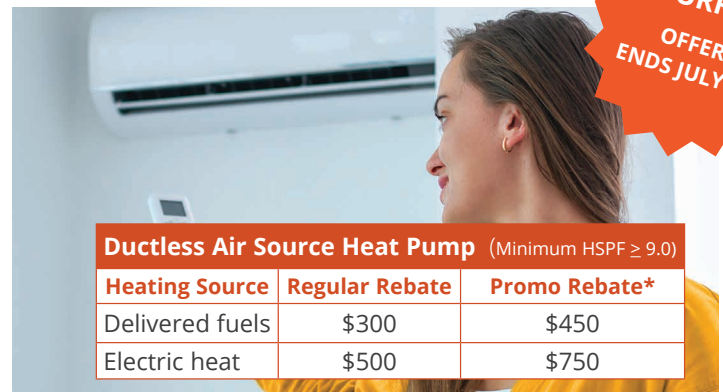
Whether temps rise or fall, your energy bill will stay cool.

Take advantage of these hot promotional rebates! Install a qualifying, energy-saving air-source heat pump or ductless air-source heat pump and save.



HURRY!
OFFER
ENDS JULY 31

Air Source Heat Pump	Promo Rebate*
≥ 8.2 HSPF	\$1,000
≥ 9.0 HSPF	\$2,000



HURRY!
OFFER
ENDS JULY 31

Ductless Air Source Heat Pump (Minimum HSPF ≥ 9.0)		
Heating Source	Regular Rebate	Promo Rebate*
Delivered fuels	\$300	\$450
Electric heat	\$500	\$750

1. The technology of today's **air-source heat pumps** cool and heat your home, even in sub-zero temps, providing efficient, dependable and reliable comfort year-round. Equipment must be enrolled in an Energy Wise® off-peak rate and installed by a qualified contractor to receive the rebate.

2. A **ductless air-source heat pump** is a good solution for homes with non-ducted heating systems, or for room additions where installing ductwork is not feasible. Ductless air-source heat pumps must have a HSPF ≥ 9.0 to qualify for the rebate.

**Limited funds are available and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Rebate amounts and programs are subject to change without notice.*



WITH REBATES ON EVERYTHING FROM BATTERY-POWERED YARD TOOLS TO AC TUNEUPS, IT'S EASY AND COST EFFECTIVE TO MAKE YOUR HOME MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT. FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL THE ENERGY EXPERTS® AT **651-463-6243** OR VISIT: **DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM > MEMBER SERVICES > PROGRAMS & REBATES > FOR YOUR HOME**

Summer pole inspections

Utili-Tech, a pole inspection contractor hired by Dakota Electric Association, is conducting annual pole inspections in our service area throughout June and July.

Areas included are Hampton Township, Hampton, New Trier, Douglas Township and Miesville. The pole inspector will be identified as a Utili-Tech employee, contracted by Dakota Electric to gather pole data as it

relates to the above-ground distribution system. The inspector will attempt to contact each member before performing inspections. The inspector will walk through backyards and private properties, as well as use an ATV to access certain pole locations.

Please contact Dakota Electric at 651-463-6265 if you have questions or concerns about pole inspections in these areas.

Are you struggling to pay your bill?

Dakota Electric Resources

If you need more time to pay the amount owed, we will work with you to establish a payment plan for your account. You can contact us 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**.

Community Resources

Energy Assistance Programs are available if you, your family or someone you know needs energy assistance.

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

Financial assistance available to help with utility bills

We know that COVID-19 has created additional financial hardships, placing an even larger burden on families already struggling to pay their bills or bring their accounts current. If you are experiencing difficulty paying your electric bill, the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) helps pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs for income-qualified homeowners and renters.

EAP primary-heat grants range from \$200 to \$1,600 depending on family size, income and energy costs. In addition to primary-heat grants, crisis-benefit grants are also available. For the second year in a row, the Minnesota Department of Commerce has increased the maximum annual crisis-benefit grants for qualifying households from \$600 to \$1,200.

Despite the large infusion of dollars into the EAP program, applications for primary-heat benefits are down by about 10%, and applications for crisis benefits are down by about 30%. The EAP application deadline is May 31, 2021, but may possibly be extended until Sept. 1, 2021.

Dakota Electric exists because of you, and we are dedicated to the people and communities we serve. If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for either of these programs, please contact member services at 651-463-6212 or check out the community resources to the left.

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>, for more details and to access the application portal.
- Contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance.

Source: MREA



Your Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative

4300 220th Street West
Farmington, MN 55024

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Board Meeting**
May 27, 8:30 a.m.
Board meetings are being held virtually.
- **Memorial Day**
May 31
Office closed in honor of Memorial Day.

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
DAKOTA ELECTRIC
ASSOCIATION

CONNECT WITH US!



dakotaelectric.com/event-calendar

DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM

METER & LCR UPDATE

Quick Tip!

If your LCR was recently upgraded, please start your AC to make sure everything is running properly before the summer heat hits. Call the Energy Experts® at 651-463-6243 if you have any questions.

We're actively upgrading our meters and load control receivers (LCR) to better serve our members. You may see a Dakota Electric technician in your yard.

Members will receive a postcard in the mail notifying them that their meter(s) or LCRs will be upgraded. Once a meter technician arrives at the member's home, they will knock and present themselves. All technicians will follow social distancing guidelines and wear a mask while making contact with the member.

After the new equipment is installed the contractor will leave behind a door hanger informing the member of the change. Thank you for your patience as we work to improve our service.



IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ADVANCED METER PROJECT, CALL US AT **651-460-7499**, EMAIL METERS@DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM OR VISIT: DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM > METERS.

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For Dakota Electric Members

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