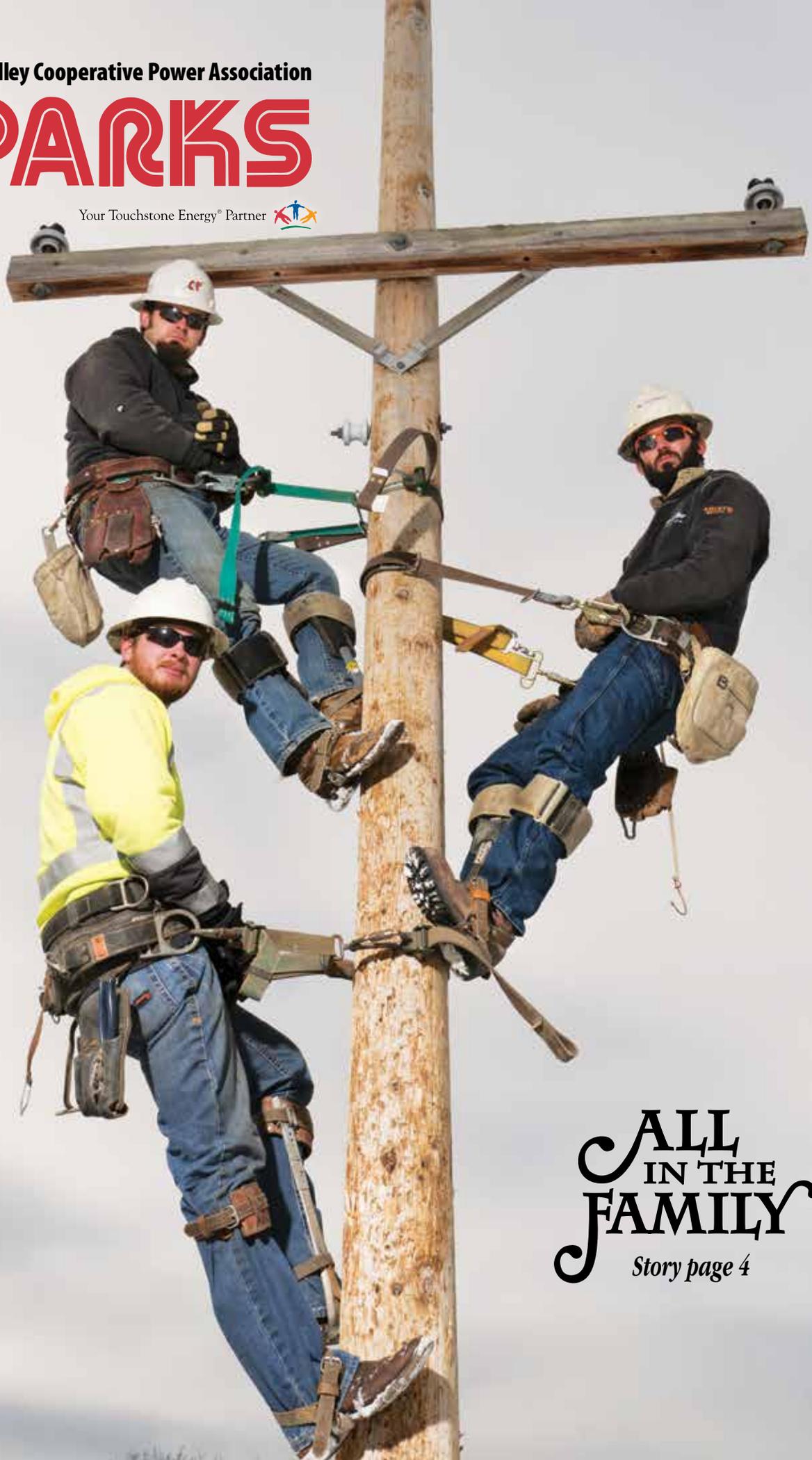


Red River Valley Cooperative Power Association

# SPARKS

April 2018

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



**ALL  
IN THE  
FAMILY**  
*Story page 4*

# SPARKS

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 Rich Whitcomb, Editor  
 Mary Merrill, Graphic Artist

April 2018  
 Volume 62, No. 3

Halstad, Minnesota (USPS 509-300)

## OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Roger Krostue ..... Fisher  
 Chairman  
 Marvis Thompson ..... Perley  
 Vice Chairman  
 Trevor Sorby ..... Glyndon  
 Secretary-Treasurer  
 Sarah Tommerdahl ..... Hendrum  
 Neil Wieser ..... Moorhead

Lauren Brorby, CPA  
 Chief Executive Officer

## Scheduled Board Meeting

Held in Halstad at the cooperative office starting at 8:30 a.m. on the next to last Monday of each month.

**Outages: 800-788-7784**

**Your cooperative is participating with Minnkota Power Cooperative on a PURPA waiver.**

To learn more, go to <http://www.minnkota.com/purpawaiver.html>

**On the cover:** Brothers Travis, Jesse and Adam Huot (top to bottom), along with their mother, Leslie, all work for different electric cooperatives in the Minnkota system. Adam works for Red River Valley Co-op Power. Story on pages 4-5.



Lauren Brorby, CPA  
 CEO

## THE CEO'S REPORT

# 150 attend 81<sup>st</sup> annual meeting; District 1 director opening

Your cooperative's employees enjoyed visiting with the 150 or so members and guests who attended our 81st annual meeting March 22 in Halstad.

Besides great conversation, members enjoyed a complimentary supper and learned about the cooperative's performance in 2017 and what is planned for this year. Members learned the Board of Directors did retire \$100,000 of capital credits from 1990 at its February meeting to give back to members with their April statements.

Attendees also heard that no rate increase is planned assuming kWh budgeted projections are met. Wholesale power rates should be stable for the near future. Cooperative staff also explained how new metering technology and office software will make for an extremely busy 24 months as the cooperative undertakes these necessary upgrades simultaneously.

But beyond all the indicators of your cooperative's health in terms of service, reliability and rates, it is the basic foundation of your cooperative in its 81<sup>st</sup> year I keep reflecting upon. Technology changes, but the importance of personal relationships does not. The members of this cooperative demonstrate every year the vitality of local control and grassroots democracy through participation and in the election of directors.

## District 1 director opening

With the retirement

of Kay Green, Ada, from the Board of Directors an opening for a director from District 1 is available. Interested members in District 1 (see map for a list of townships) can send in the bill insert from their April statements to learn more about being a director.

Interested members in District 1 have until May 18 to send back the insert. At that time, we will mail the member a director qualifications packet and the Board will begin considering applicants. Whoever is chosen will be up for re-election at the next annual meeting for a full three-year term per the co-op's bylaws.

Any interested member in District 1 may either call for the bill insert or print off the insert from our website, [www.rrvcoop.com](http://www.rrvcoop.com), under the Quick Links section of the homepage.

### Director Districts

District 1 Townships	
4 - Nesbit	22 - Scandia
5 - Huntsville & Rhinehart	23 - Hubbard
6 - Bygland	24 - Shelly
7 - Fisher	25 - Good Hope
8 - Lowell	26 - Lockhart
12 - Fairfax	27 - Spring Creek
13 - Andover	28 - Green Meadow
14 - Roome	29 - Pleasant view
15 - Tynsid	30 - Anthony
16 - Vineland	31 - Halstad
17 - Hammond	33 - Hegne
18 - Russia	34 - McDonaldsville
21 - Reis	35 - Lake Ida

District 2 Townships	
32 - Hendrum	44 - Flowing
36 - Rockwell	45 - Morken
37 - Winchester	46 - Kragnes
38 - Mary	48 - Moland
39 - Lee	49 - Spring Prairie
40 - Georgetown	49A - Cromwell
41 - Viding	50 - Riverton
42 - Felton	50A - Hawley
43 - Hagen	

District 3 Townships	
47 - Oakport	55A - Skree
51 - Glyndon	56 - Barnesville
52 - Moorhead	56A - Humboldt
53 - Kurtz	57 - Alliance
54 - Elmwood	58 - Holy Cross
55 - Elkton	

# Slide into comfort and savings today!

## 4 Heating Options TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING A NEW OR RETROFIT HEATING SYSTEM

### Air-source heat pump with modulating plenum heater and gas backup

Air-source heat pumps are very efficient systems that transfer heat instead of creating it. In the summer, they work exactly like a central air conditioner, but in



the winter they provide very comfortable and efficient heat until the temperature drops below the set point (usually 20 degrees F). Then the modulating plenum heater kicks in and works with the heat pump for extra savings. When controlled, a gas furnace kicks in.

What's nice about air-source heat pumps is how they provide year-round benefits and either pair nicely with a propane or natural gas furnace or in a heat pump/modulating plenum/propane furnace combination on the off-peak rate. This gives members the freedom to choose fuel sources.

Plus, great rebates are available that cover a large portion of an upgrade from a central AC to a heat pump.

### In-floor heat

A popular option for off-peak due to its comfort. The key is to install the proper heat storage base with sand and slab or install a dual-fuel system. Complete perimeter insulation is necessary for both styles. A \$20 per kW rebate is available (max of \$600).



### Bonus option

Large capacity water heater on off-peak credit. Purchase an electric water heater 80 gallons or larger and get great upfront rebates, plus the option of an \$11 recurring monthly credit for letting us control that water heater when energy demand is high.

For more information about off-peak, heat pumps and electric water heaters, contact Member Services at 800-788-7784 or email [info@rrvcoop.com](mailto:info@rrvcoop.com).



### Geothermal heat pumps

Provide the highest efficiencies for space heating and cooling today. Geothermal heat pumps use the constant temperature of the earth to transfer heat. Energy efficiency rebates of up to \$400 per ton are available as well as a separate rebate of \$200 per ton (\$600 max). **Plus, 30 percent federal tax credits are now available!**



When paired with a fossil fuel furnace backup, geothermal heat pumps get the off-peak rate for a heating price that is hard to beat when you combine efficiency with the 6.5 cents per kWh off-peak rate.

### Steffes thermal storage room units

An electric thermal storage option that can receive the off-peak rate, these units are perfect for existing homes with cold spots.



Steffes room units convert electricity into heat and store that heat in specially designed bricks. Energy efficiency rebates of \$20 per kW are available (\$600 max).



### Rebates

System	Potential Rebates*
Air heat pump	Up to \$1,500
Air heat pump w/mod. plenum	Up to \$2,300
Geothermal heat pump	Up to \$2,600 or greater
Electric floor heat	Up to \$600
Electric water heater >80 gallons	Up to \$450

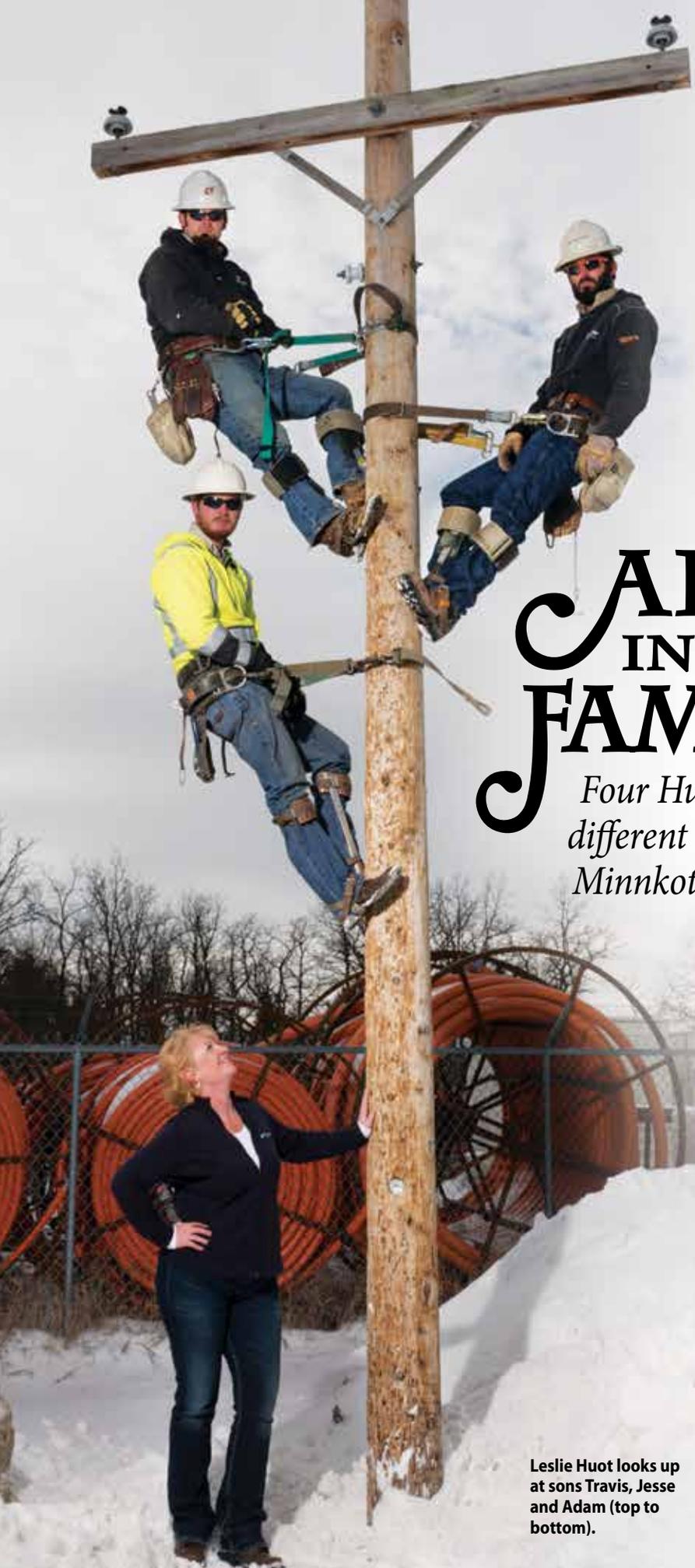
\*Example based on size, efficiency, off-peak options.

### Price difference in heating fuels per million Btus of heat



\* Outside temperatures fluctuate affecting the heat pump's efficiency. Efficiency and price per million Btus is estimated at 47 degrees F. Need additional heat like plenum heater in winter.

\*\* Heat pump with modulating plenum assumes a coefficient of performance of 1.9 at 10 degrees F using information provided and reviewed by Electro Industries, Monticello, MN.



# ALL IN THE FAMILY

*Four Huots, four  
different co-ops in  
Minnkota system*

Leslie Huot looks up at sons Travis, Jesse and Adam (top to bottom).

In the middle of the night when storms rage through northwest Minnesota, Leslie Huot can't help but worry.

Her three sons – Travis, Jesse and Adam – are electric cooperative line workers in the region. If the lights go out, working day and night in treacherous conditions is just part of the job.

"I'm very proud as a parent to have linemen," Leslie said. "It's a dangerous profession, but it's a good profession."

Leslie knows firsthand the importance of what her sons do for a living. She's worked the phone lines at Beltrami Electric Cooperative in Bemidji, Minn., for the last 17 years. Having line workers as sons helps her answer questions and relay information out to the membership.

"I feel I have a better understanding of the linemen I work with," Leslie said. "When they get called out on storm jobs, I know what they're going to be doing, because my boys do the same thing."

While it is rare to have four immediate family members working for electric cooperatives, it is even more rare that each works for a cooperative in the Minnkota system. Travis is the line foreman at Clearwater-Polk Electric Cooperative in Bagley, Minn.; Jesse is a journeyman lineman at North Star Electric Cooperative in Baudette, Minn.; and Adam is an apprentice lineman at Red River Valley Cooperative Power.

The Huots were initially drawn to cooperatives because of the rural setting and their reputation of having a family atmosphere. They haven't been disappointed.

"When I got hired, the one thing that was said to me was, 'You don't quit Beltrami Electric; you retire from Beltrami Electric,'" Leslie said. "That's just the kind of company it is. And I think our sons' co-ops are the same way."

### Growing up

Leslie and her husband, Mark, say there were no clear-cut signs that they were raising three future line workers. But when the family moved to Bemidji from western North Dakota in 1994, the tall trees in the

area provided a perfect training ground for pole climbing. In fact, on their first day in town, Jesse climbed so high he needed a ladder to get down.

“They were always climbing trees,” Leslie said. “They couldn’t stand to stay inside. So we knew they probably weren’t going to like sitting in an office someday.”

Even electrician work included too much time inside for Jesse, 30, who was the first in the family to enter the line trade. After sharing stories of a typical day on the job, his brothers followed the same career path.

As much as Jesse enjoys the fresh air and open spaces, the camaraderie on his crew may be his favorite part.

“You pretty much live with each other,” Jesse said. “A lot of other jobs, people come and go. When you get into a cooperative, people don’t leave too often.”

With a younger line crew at North Star Electric, he believes there is chance for his guys to be together for many years to come. Working on power lines in remote areas means everyone has to trust each other, he said.

“A guy might get ticked off here or there, but at the end of the day you gotta be buddies,” Jesse said.

Camaraderie is something Adam, 21, noticed right away, too. He’s had eight months on the job at Red River Valley Co-op Power and is starting to become comfortable with the processes and systems.

“I really like it so far,” Adam said. “The guys are really good to me. They take the time to teach me their way of doing things.”

## Adrenaline rush

From one brother to the next, the Huots admit they are drawn to the adrenaline rush of line work and the satisfaction of doing something that makes a difference in people’s lives. One of the career highlights for the brothers is working together on a storm project near Bagley. Each of the Minnkota cooperatives routinely reach out to help each other when Mother Nature strikes.

“We’ll have outages when we’re working nonstop for days on end,” said Travis, 31. “When you turn the power back on and they’re appreciative, it makes a guy feel pretty good.”

Travis chased that feeling all the way to

New York, where in 2012 he helped restore power after Hurricane Sandy. But with three young children at home, he’s happy sticking close to the area. He says the kids are getting used to the 24-hour demands of the job.

“If it’s suppertime and I gotta go to work, my kids will say, ‘Daddy, you gotta go fix power?’ I say, ‘Yeah, daddy has to go fix power.’”

If the crews are in a safe area close to home, his wife, Kate, will drive near the job site so his 4-year-old daughter, Peyton, and 3-year-old son, Judson, can watch their dad work.

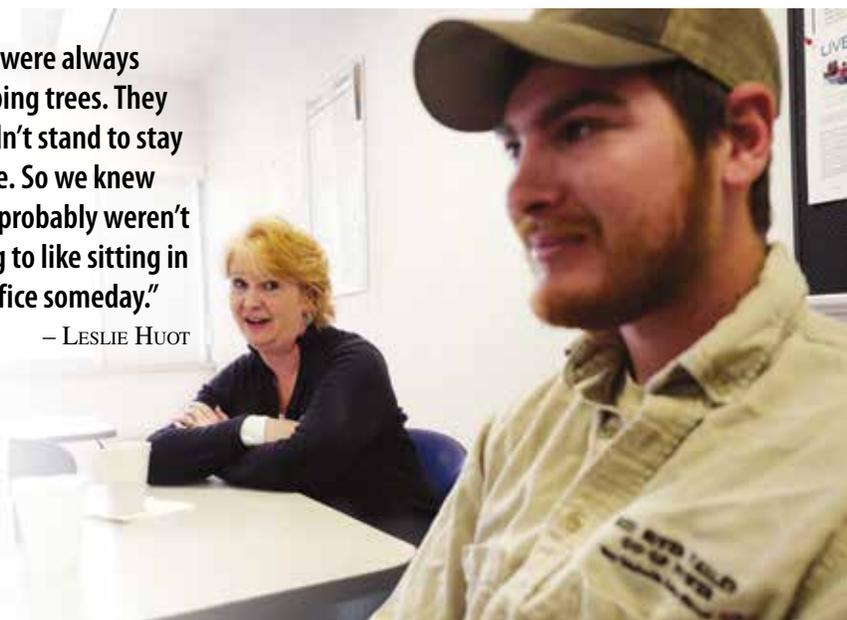
“There’s probably going to be another lineman in the family,” Leslie said with a smile.



Brothers Travis (Clearwater-Polk Electric), Adam (Red River Valley Co-op Power) and Jesse (North Star Electric) are line workers for cooperatives in the Minnkota system.

“They were always climbing trees. They couldn’t stand to stay inside. So we knew they probably weren’t going to like sitting in an office someday.”

— LESLIE HUOT



## Notice to cogenerators

In compliance with Red River Valley Co-op Power's adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, Red River Valley Co-op Power is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers whom satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. Red River Valley Co-op Power is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by Red River Valley Co-op Power. Interested members should contact Red River Valley Co-op Power by calling 218-456-2139.



## Director Kay Green retires

Kay Green, Ada, recently retired as District 1 director for Red River Valley Co-op Power after serving in that capacity for 22 years. She received recognition from Lauren Brorby, Red River Valley Co-op Power CEO, for her dedication to the co-op at its 81<sup>st</sup> annual meeting last month.

## Plan ahead for new services

If you plan on upgrades or new services, especially if large fans for drying are involved, please contact your cooperative as soon as possible. This is helpful because the delivery time for large transformers can be lengthy. In addition, line crews already have a number of projects planned and the schedule gets especially tight later in the summer. As much as practical, the service upgrades will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. Please call and ask for Engineering.



## Rebates for electric vehicle home chargers

Install a 240-volt charger and receive a \$50 per kilowatt (kW) rebate (maximum \$500) and the money-saving off-peak charging rate!

For more information, call

**Red River Valley Co-op Power**  
218-456-2139 or 1-800-788-7784

## Installation of new meters to begin in May



Your cooperative will receive its first full shipment of meters for the new system later this month for deployment to begin in early May. Red River Valley Co-op Power employees will be installing the new meters. If you have an off-peak meter inside the house we plan to contact you prior to installation as much as possible. This is the first of many communications with the membership regarding the meter changeout.



## Have a successful planting season rooted in safety

As farmers return to their fields for spring planting, Red River Valley Co-op Power urges them to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. Operating large equipment near these lines is one of the often overlooked, yet potentially deadly, hazards of working on a farm.

Start by making sure everyone knows to maintain a 10-foot clearance minimum from power lines. “Sometimes a power line is closer than it looks,” says Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council’s Safe Electricity program. “Helpful safety steps include using a spotter and designating preplanned routes that avoid hazard areas.”

Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors now have tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters or cultivators near power lines, and never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.

Simply working too close to a

power line is dangerous as electricity can arc or “jump” to conducting objects, such as a ladder, pole or truck. Remember, nonmetallic materials such as lumber, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.

“If your equipment does come into contact with power lines, stay in the cab and call Red River Valley Co-op Power and 911 for help,” explains Hall. “If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground. Even if a line has landed on the ground, there is still potential for the area to be energized. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until help arrives.”

If exiting the cab is absolutely necessary because of fire, the proper action is to jump – not step – with both feet together, hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

# DIGGING SOON?



One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked AND helps protect you from injury and expense. Safe digging is no accident: always call 811 before you dig.

Visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com) for more information.

COLOR CODING FOR MARKING UNDERGROUND UTILITIES	
WHITE	Proposed excavation
PINK	Temporary survey markings
RED	Electric power lines, cables, conduit and lighting cables
YELLOW	Gas, oil, steam, petroleum or gaseous materials
ORANGE	Communication, alarm or signal lines, cables or conduit
BLUE	Water
PURPLE	Reclaimed water, irrigation and slurry lines
GREEN	Sewer and drain lines

## Call 811 before you dig; private and public lines must be located



Homeowners need to remember that every digging job first requires a call to 811 at least two business days before digging to get utility lines marked – even small projects like planting trees and shrubs.

The depth of utility lines varies and there may be multiple utility lines in a common area. Digging without calling can disrupt service, harm you and those around you and potentially result in fines and repair costs. Calling 811 before every digging job gets underground utility power lines marked for free, up to your main meter.

**Underground power lines from the main meter inward, however, are the responsibility of the member. Homeowners need to call their local electrician to have their private lines marked.**

Remember, before any digging project, large or small, you must call 811 to have utility lines marked. When you call 811, you’ll be routed to the local Gopher State One Call center where they will lead you step by step through the process and questions.



**RED RIVER VALLEY**  
COOPERATIVE POWER ASSOCIATION

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

# Power plant tour *June 6-7, 2018*

Come and travel with your friends to learn how your electricity is generated during this year's cooperative power plant tour June 6-7.

You'll travel in comfort in an air-conditioned charter bus for a fun and informative tour of Minnkota's Milton R. Young coal-fired generating plant and the BNI Coal mine. You'll also see the Ashtabula Wind Energy Center near Valley City, N.D, and tour the



Ashtabula Wind Energy Center.

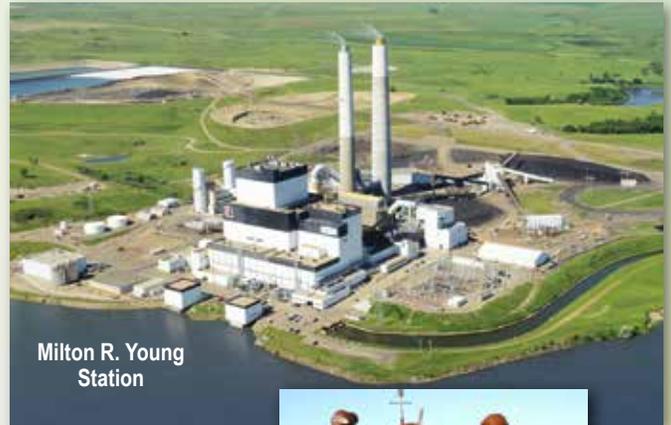
Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center.

At night you'll relax for the evening at the Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck where you'll also be served a delicious banquet and hearty breakfast.

Bus fare, meals and hotel are included in the \$80 per person fee. The cost for children 14 and under is \$45.

Space is limited, so reserve your spot by filling out and returning the form below, complete with your check.

Hundreds of Red River Valley Co-op Power members have enjoyed the tour through the years. Now it's your turn!



Milton R. Young Station



Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center

## Power Plant Tour Registration Form

*Deadline: May 22, 2018*

Names of Participants

Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL FORM AND CHECK TO: Red River Valley Cooperative Power Association, P.O. Box 358, Halstad, MN 56548-0358**  
You will be mailed a letter of confirmation with more tour information.