

CURRENT CONNECTION

New Advanced Meters Help Us To Help You >>>

By Patrick Goff



Crow Wing Power has always been a forward-thinking cooperative, utilizing proven technology to improve our service to members. A couple of years ago, we began an aggressive meter exchange program to upgrade our then aging Automated Meter Reading system. I've been with the cooperative for 36 years and as Power Quality and Metering Manager, I'm very pleased how smoothly the meter

replacement went and how well the new metering system is performing.

The major investment and magnitude of the entire project was a huge challenge that took a total company and team effort, affecting every employee and member!

From the pilot project forward, we immediately started to realize the benefits of the technology upgrade.

The new Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) is now helping us serve members better with improved efficiency, reliability and power quality.

The replacement project, began in March 2018. We service 59,736 meters in our three-county service area, therefore we knew it would be a multi-year project.

Because of the new system we now have:

Increased Efficiency

- We use the system to control water heaters, and other dual fuel and off-peak heating and cooling devices.
- With data from the meters coming to our office, we are able to read meters and disconnect and reconnect remotely, saving us a lot of time. The process is much more efficient for setting up new member accounts.



- All of our meters report a reading every hour, at minimum, requiring less than one minute of communication time per day.
- Information coming from the new meters allows us to monitor the system in near real-time and correct problems and inefficiencies.
- Faster restoration – we can pinpoint areas affected by outages so we can respond more quickly, and even automatically confirm when power is restored.

Increased Reliability

- With more detailed information about what is happening in the field, we are able to respond faster to outages. The new meters tell us when and where there is an outage or disturbance. (Members still need to call when they have an outage.)
- More data improves our power quality monitoring.
- More data enables us to provide more accurate information about outages and restoration times.

Affordability

- New meters aid in our ability to help members address high electric use and bills.
- Puts members in control - Members can learn about their energy use in near real-time on SmartHub, the personal online electric account management portal. In other words, if from 3:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon, a member uses the dishwasher, clothes washer and the dryer while baking a cake, they would be able to see the affect that has on their electric use online.
- Operating more efficiently keeps our costs down.
- During this meter AMI upgrade, we also replaced our aging and outdated 42-year old Load Management Control system that is directly tied into our AMI metering system. This improved control has immediately reduced our peaking situations and power costs.
- Because of the system, we can now allow Prepaid billing, where a member can choose to pay for electricity ahead of time like filling up a gas tank. (more information about that is on page 2, the CEO column)

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A WORD FROM YOUR CEO

PrePay Opportunity Coming in April >>>

At the January Board meeting, the Board of Directors authorized a new choice/option of paying your electric bills, called PrePay. We will launch the program in April. It gives members another choice in how they manage and pay their account. We're now able to provide this service because of the recent major investment we made with our advanced metering system.

Traditionally, members get a bill in the mail or e-mail for electricity used over the previous 30 days. PrePay works differently, where you pay for electricity up front and use it until it runs out.

Think of it as the electric equivalent of putting gas in your car. When the gauge says you're low, you stop and fill the tank. If you don't have enough to fill the tank, you put in what you can. With PrePay, after you sign up and the proper equipment is installed, you pay as much as you want. As you use electricity, you get updates about your power use, so you'll have a better idea of how much you're using. When you get low, just "fill the tank" again.

How much you buy is up to you. You can pay enough for a couple of days, a week, or months in advance.

There would be no security deposits or credit checks for PrePay members.

Smaller payments to keep an account active may work for people with variable budgets and payday.

Tech savvy members that enjoy hands on control of their electric use and costs will be able to monitor and possibly change their lifestyle habits.

The program will calculate your average use and be able to tell you approximately how many days you have left with the balance in your account.

Members that have Google Home Assistance or Amazon Echo can ask the voice-activated device questions, like 'What's the balance in my electric account', or 'How much electricity did I use yesterday?'

Our new meters make it possible to remotely disconnect and connect from our office. Near real time notifications and account monitoring are now possible.

It can be an ideal fit for seasonal members.

For details and Questions & Answers go to our website and click on PrePay.

I'll keep you informed,

Bruce L. Kraemer, CEO

Board Meeting Highlights

Crow Wing Power's Board of Directors conducted its regular monthly meeting Thursday, January 21, 2021. A quorum of directors was present.

President Bob Kangas opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following reports were given:

- CEO report
- Finance Committee report

The following actions were taken:

The Board approved

- January Consent Agenda.
- Minutes of the December 17, 2020 regular board meeting.
- Pre-Paid Metering Program
- TOU and Off-Peak EV Programs and Rates
- 2021 Annual Meeting date set for August 4, 2021
- Resolution to Amend Revenue Deferral Plan
- Director expense reports for December 2020.

Members can review detailed minutes at cwpower.com/board-and-meetings or by logging into their SmartHub account. Log in is located on the homepage of our website.



Have a Billing Question? Chat with our Billing Department Online.

We now have a chat feature for billing questions. Our Billing staff is online to answer questions on your bill, capital credits and name/address/email changes. They are available during business hours Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Co-op Calendar Contest

Once again we are conducting a calendar contest. To enter the contest, please submit your scenic photos of Minnesota to us. If your photo is chosen for the 2022 calendar, you will receive a \$25 electric bill credit. We will have a spiral bound calendar produced and available in early December.

Guidelines for the contest:

- Only Crow Wing Power members may enter the contest. (CWP employees and their immediate families are not eligible to enter the contest.)
- Send your photos electronically. Photos must be scenic capturing the beauty of Minnesota's four seasons. Photos must not include people.
- One membership (household) may submit up to five photos.
- Only landscape orientation photos will be accepted. Photos need to be sized for printing 12 inches wide by 9 inches high. 300 dpi minimum quality.
- To submit photos, go to www.cwpower.com, go to News/Events, click on Photo Contest and fill out the entire form including the photo. Deadline for submission(s) is October 1, 2021. To see last year's samples, go to our website.

Go Paperless! *and maybe win some free electricity!*

**Contest Ends
March 31**

Go to cwpower.com and click on the **Go Paperless!** Contest. Join thousands of members that receive their power bill electronically (no paper). Enter for your chance to win one of six \$100 bill credits.

Three Director Positions Open for Filing >>>



Bob Kangas

Three districts will be open for the Director election this year. Bob Kangas is the current Director for District 1 A and he lives in the Pine River area.

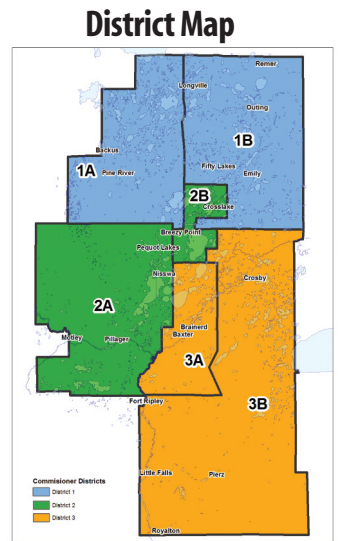
Ric Larson serves in District 3B and lives near Crosby.

LuAnn Nelson is the current Director for District 2 At-Large from the Crosslake area.

Current board members have until June 4 to file as a candidate for the 2021 election if they so choose.

Filing opens March 22. Members can file for any one of the positions prior to June 4 at 4:30 p.m. when filing closes, but they must live in or have real estate and receive service from us in the open positions of District 1 A, District 3B or District 2 At-large (District 2A or 2B).

If you are interested in running or have questions regarding the process, please contact Crow Wing Power at 829-2827 or 1-800-648-9401.



District 1 District 2 District 3

Collect Your Rebate...Lower Your Bill

If you're in the market for an energy-efficient home heating and cooling system, consider a heat pump. Heat Pumps come in two varieties; Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP) and Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP). And both come with rebates and tax credits! Heat pumps move heat in during the winter and out during the summer, reducing home heating and cooling by as much as 40%, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Learn more by visiting www.CWPower.com or calling Crow Wing Power Member Services at (800) 648-9401

Air source heat pumps provide home cooling and supplemental heating using significantly less electricity than conventional air conditioners and furnaces.



BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



WHITEFISH PROPERTIES

218-692-2246 | www.crosslakereservations.com

ABOUT: Whitefish Properties includes Whitefish Lodge & Suites, Manhattan Beach Lodge, Whitefish Catering & Manhattan's Restaurant. Whitefish Lodge, built in 2006 in the heart of Crosslake, Minnesota is a great getaway location and an award-winning wedding venue. Manhattan Beach Lodge has been entertaining guests since 1929 on beautiful Trout Lake of the Whitefish Chain of Lakes and includes our award-winning restaurant, exclusive wedding venue, rustic lodge and breathtaking sunsets.



WE WANT YOU TO KNOW: Whitefish Properties is your Lodging, Dining & Events Destination of the Whitefish Chain! We have what you are looking for! From a romantic getaway on Big Trout Lake to family fun in the heart of Crosslake – Whitefish Properties has something for everyone!

COOPERATIVE MEMBER DISCOUNT: Receive a 10% discount on lodging at Whitefish Lodge & Suites and Manhattan Beach Lodge.

Crow Wing Power's Co-op Connections is powering businesses and providing you with discounts. With over 115 local businesses, visit cwpower.com to explore all the ways to save. We welcome new businesses to participate.



Planning New Projects That Require Changes to Electric Service? >>>

Most of us welcome the month of March bringing the promise of spring and it may signify the start of new projects. If you are planning a large project such as a remodel, new home or cabin, or similar endeavor that involves a new or change of an existing electrical service within our service area, Crow Wing Power is here to help.

Planning is an important part of any project to ensure a smooth course along the journey. If you are planning a new service, there are some things to consider.

- **Timeline:** New electric service can take an average of three weeks from the time of application to installation. Plan accordingly and give your project some buffer room for variables that may affect this timeline.
- **Road Restrictions:** Be aware of the frost conditions and the road restrictions as set forth by the State and County Highway Department as an important part to project planning. Historically, Crow Wing Power has been in full swing around the beginning of May.
- **Sizing your electric service:** Are you planning to take advantage of Crow Wing Power's special programs from electric heating, water heating or electric vehicle charging? Determining your electrical needs is crucial to sizing any electric service or upgrade.

Crow Wing Power's office is currently closed for in-person visits until further notice. To apply for a new or upgraded electric service you can visit our website cwpower.com, navigate to the service tab and fill out the required forms. To discuss your project please call our office at 1-800-648-9401, and ask for a Member Service Representative. Whether it is a new electric service, service upgrade or relocation of electrical power lines, we are here to help.



Annual Impact Grant Notice >>>

Crow Wing Power Community Trust (Operation Round-Up) is offering an Impact Grant of up to \$12,000. The purpose of the Impact Grant will be to give a boost to a unique project/program, organization or community to insure its success.

Applicants must show that this one time grant would have a major impact for their project, organization or community. The organization needs to show that they have a history of success, or if a start-up project, the business plan must be strong and show large community support. Projects that focus on human health and well-being will be given additional consideration.

To qualify for an application, contact Char Kinzer 218-829-2827 or 1-800-648-9401. Applications must be submitted by April 10, 2021.

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The power of human connections

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www.cwpower.com

Editor: Char Kinzer

Board meetings are held the third
Thursday of each month beginning at
9:30 a.m.

Directors. Here to Help!

Following is a list of directors and their
telephone numbers:

Bob Kangas	218-587-4453
Paul Koering.....	218-851-9954
Ric Larson	218-546-5781
Gordon Martin.....	218-746-3971
Bryan McCulloch.....	218-820-9708
Doris Mezzenga	218-692-1004
LuAnn Nelson	612-400-4627
Gert Roggenkamp	218-562-4566
Dwight Thiesse.....	218-831-8605