

CURRENT CONNECTION

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Office Shop Wins 2022 Commitment to Community Award >>>

Crow Wing Power is pleased to announce the winner of the 2022 Commitment to Community Award is the Office Shop, Inc. of Aitkin and Brainerd. Their story is one that truly has played out with tremendous community outreach.



Jodie and Scott Johnson may be best known locally as owners of the Office Shop, but many people

>> *The Johnson family with Jodie and Scott, Zachary and their daughter, Kari Jo with her husband and their twin daughters.*

are unaware of a situation in their personal life that spawned a philanthropic cancer fund for children.

Thirty years ago, their infant son, Zachary was diagnosed with Leukemia when he was six months old and his sister was just three. Zach was also born with Down Syndrome, which complicated the situation. The uniqueness of Zachary's medical situation, however, helped doctors understand how best to treat patients like baby Zach and ultimately created medical breakthroughs.

The Aitkin-based family experienced a lot of trials and tribulations in those early years, but they 'made it through'

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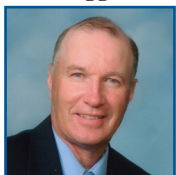
Three Director Positions Open for Filing >>>



Bryan McCulloch



Gert Roggenkamp



Dwight Thiesse

Three districts are open for Director elections this year. Bryan McCulloch is the current Director for District 1At-Large. He's from the Fifty Lakes area. Gert Roggenkamp currently serves in District 2B and resides in Breezy Point. Dwight Thiesse, whose residence is south of Brainerd, is the current Director for District 3A.

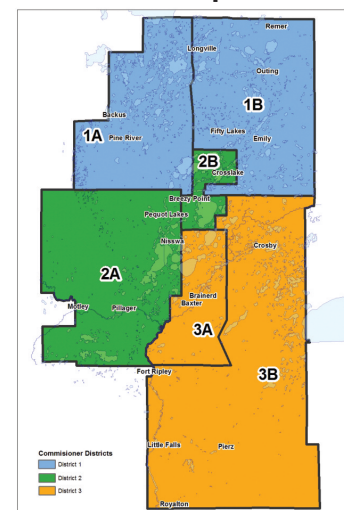
Current board members have until April 18 to file as a candidate for the 2023 election if they so choose.

Filing is open from February 2 to April 18 to file as a candidate for the 2023 election positions. Members can file for any one of the open positions prior to April 11 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 At-Large (1A and 1B combined), 2B or 3A.

Ballots for Director elections will be sent in May to all members. Voting will culminate on the date of the Annual Business meeting, where elected directors will be named. The meeting has been set for Saturday, June 17 at Arrowwood Lodge in Baxter.

If you are interested in running or have questions regarding the process, please contact Crow Wing Power at 218-829-2827 or 1-800-648-9401.

District Map



 District 1  District 2  District 3

Major Mid-December Storms Knock Out Power to 10,000>>>

Back to back winter storms on Wednesday, December 14 and Thursday, December 15, dumped heavy wet snow in our service area, causing trees to sag, break and land onto power lines, knocking power out to over 10,000 cooperative members at the peak.

Wednesday's rain quickly turned to ice, then snow which caused spotted outages throughout our service territory. Line crews were able to steadily restore power that day. However, heavy, wet snow fell steadily starting at about 3:00 a.m. Thursday. And by 2:00 p.m. at the peak of the storm, there were 10,000+ people without power and 400+ outage points.

The heavy snow created extremely difficult conditions for line crews, hindering power restoration, with many impassable roads, downed trees and numerous outages. Similar to early storms we experienced in late spring, we sought additional help. Mutual aid with 25 line workers came to help from five other Minnesota electric cooperatives: 2 from Stearns Electric; 6 from Runestone Electric; 4 from Kandiyohi; 4 from Roseau; and 2 from Todd Wadena. We received contractor help as well: 3 from Highline Construction and 2 from Legacy Power Line.

With our line workers we now had a 60 boots on the ground working 14-hour shifts around the clock.

On Friday, the third day, crews were making progress, with more roads cleared, but the number of outages were staying frustratingly high as more and more trees succumbed to the strain. By 5:00 p.m. that night there were still 300 outages and 5,500 people affected.

Saturday's progress was substantial. Line crews continued the full court press and by

9:00 all but a few were left to repair. For the next several days, outages kept occurring with the heavy-laden trees and clean up took weeks.

The restoration process was frustrating, in that many times a line would be repaired only to find another heavily laden tree would fall, knocking the power out for a second or third time later in the day.

We have an aggressive right-of-way clearing program, but this historic heavy snow bent limbs and trees way beyond the normal right-of-way clearance.

Community support shown through social media was very strong and people generally understood the magnitude and appreciated the crews' perseverance.

>> Photo Credit to Steve Kohls, Brainerd Dispatch



Board Meeting Highlights

Crow Wing Power's Board of Directors conducted its regular monthly meeting Thursday, Nov. 17, 2022. 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
- Directors shared highlights of meetings attended on behalf of the cooperative

The following actions were taken:

The Board approved:

- November Consent Agenda
- Minutes of the October 20, 2022 regular board meeting
- Approve Electronic Voting for 2023 Director Election
- 2023 Operating Budget
- Director expense reports for October 2022

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. December minutes will be published after approval in January. The next board meeting is January 19, 2023.

Important: Correct Use of Outage Texting Program is Necessary >>>

We launched a new Texting program for reporting outages in November and had our first experience with members utilizing it during the mid-December storm.

Members that had mobile numbers in our system were able to text OUT to 1-800-648-9401 to report they were out of power. Unfortunately, we had to shut the Text program down in the midst of the outage restoration, because people began texting OUT when they didn't even know if their home or cabin was without power. Text STATUS to get an update.

It's extremely important that TEXT CODES are used properly. Find out more at cwpower.com.

Text Keywords –

Only text OUT if you know you are!

- Text OUT to 800.648.9401 to report an outage.
- Text STATUS to get an update.
- Text HELP for more information.
- Text QUIT to opt-out of this service at any time.
- When power is restored, the system may send you a text. However, if your power is still out, please call us right away at 800.648.9401.
- If you opt out, you can opt in at any time by texting CWPTEXT to 800.648.9401.
- Text OUT only if you know you are out of power!

>> Hint: Use the camera on your cell phone to take a picture of this basic text code box, so it will be handy if you experience a power outage. Putting 800-648-9401 in your contacts will also save you time.

Washington Youth Tour Contest Open to High School Juniors >>>

The annual Washington Youth Tour is now receiving applications from high school juniors that would like to take a trip to Washington D.C. Each year we sponsor students for this week long trip where they join nearly 2,000 young adults from other electric cooperatives, 44 other states.



Students that attend have an experience of a lifetime, visiting all the great sights, memorials and museums, getting to spend a day on Capitol Hill with elected officials and making friends.

High school students interested in applying need to write an essay, sharing a little about themselves and why they would be a good candidate. Students are encouraged to go to their high school counselor's office for more information or go to cwpower.com/Washington-youth-tour to apply. Applications are due by February 10, 2023.

An employee committee will review the applications and make recommendations for the finalists. Ultimately two students will be selected.

The 2023 Washington Youth Tour is scheduled for June 15-22 and is open to high school juniors that live within our service area but do not have to be a member of Crow Wing Power area.

>> Minnesota students from 2022, including Amber Gardner, Bryce Teenier & Emily Holtti, our delegates

Commitment to Community Winner Continued >>>

according to Jodie and Scott because of the tremendous emotional and financial support they received from their employees, family, friends and the community, especially the Aitkin Women of Today and the Aitkin Jaycees that Jodie and Scott were members of. Employees had to run the fairly new business, while Scott and Jodie were consumed with medical concerns.



>> Neil Hofus runs the cartridge recycling program at the Office Shop in Brainerd. Only certain cartridges can be recycled.

The community financial support was overwhelming. At the time, Scott and Jodie were young and able to use some of the funds for long extended hospital stays, however they were compelled to do something to help other families going through similar situations.

They partnered with the local Riverwood Healthcare Center's Foundation and created the Zachary Johnson Kids with Cancer Fund. The fund provides financial support to local families who have a child under the age of 21 with cancer.

Jodie said, "We figured out a way to raise funds to support the program and that's where our Office Shop employees rallied for the cause."

>> Jodie and Scott Johnson, holding a congratulatory plaque and a \$1,000 check, pose at their Brainerd shop with 11 of the 21 Office Shop staff that have been instrumental in the success of the business and the Zachary Johnson Cancer Fund for children.

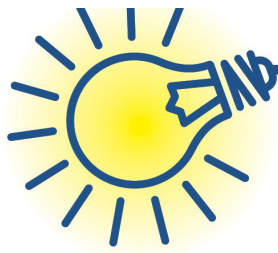


They designed an ink and toner cartridge recycling program, where they collect and sell used cartridges for remanufacturing. Delivery drivers, retail customers and employees continue to promote the recycle program that currently reaps an average of \$15,000 per year.

The Riverwood Foundation administers the Fund and has been instrumental in fundraising as well. Families with children diagnosed with cancer can contact Riverwood Foundation in Aitkin to apply for a \$2,000 grant.

Commitment to Community recognition details: Each year, Crow Wing Power and other participating electric cooperatives around the State, seek out local organizations that show exceptional commitment to community. Our winners receive a plaque and \$1,000.

Their project will also be submitted to the State-wide Commitment to Community contest, with other Cooperatives' winning organizations. If selected for the State-wide award, they would receive an additional \$1,000 and plaque at the Minnesota Rural Electric Association's annual meeting in 2023.



Did you know?

All Crow Wing Power members can be a credit union member!

Join us!

- Local Customer Service
- Lower Loan Interest Rates
- Higher Savings Interest Rates
- Free Checking
- Community Focus



877-563-3072
cwpcu.org

CROW WING POWER
CREDIT UNION

2023 Puzzles In Every Issue

New for 2023, we will be switching from a monthly publication to a bi-monthly publication. Puzzles will be in every issue.

CURRENT CONNECTION

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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 Koering218-851-9954
Ric Larson218-546-5781
Bryan McCulloch218-821-8390
LuAnn Nelson.....612-400-4627
Giles Radtke.....218-839-9182
Gert Roggenkamp.....218-562-4566
Mark Ronnei.....218-821-4050
Dwight Thiesse.....218-831-8605

Puzzlers - Enter to Win One of Three \$25 bill credits! >>>

Complete the bi-monthly crossword puzzle and send it back to us by February 15.

- Scan and email to info@cwpower.com
- Mail it with bill
- Online at cwpower.com - click membership - Current Connection newsletter - January Online Puzzle.

Due to the change in publish dates, December and January puzzle winners will be published in the March/April issue.

January Puzzle

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Acct number _____

January Puzzle Clues:

ACROSS

- Newsletters will print when?
- Number of co-ops that sent mutual aid workers.
- The month students go to Washington D.C.
- Our co-op will sponsor how many Youth Tour students?
- What day was the peak of the storm?

DOWN

- The Aitkin _____ gave financial help to the Johnsons.
- This Foundation administers the Cancer fund.
- The Annual Business meeting will be at Arrowwood _____.
- Every printed newsletter will have this in 2023.
- Director ballots will be sent when?

Use the clues to fill in the words above.
Words can go across or down.
Letters are shared when the words intersect.

New for 2023 – Newsletter Goes Bi-Monthly >>>

It's a new year and we'd like to try publishing the printed Current Connection newsletter every other month rather than monthly.

As our world is evolving from print to digital, we would encourage members to stay abreast of current issues through our website, and/or join the 9,000+ members that receive their news electronically.

We'll continue to send Enews monthly to our members' emails who are on paperless billing and we'll insert bi-monthly printed copies in members' mailed electric bills.

Bi-monthly paper newsletters will be published in January, March, May (Annual Report), July, September, and November.