



# CURRENT CONNECTION

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Bi-Monthly Publication of Crow Wing Power

July | August 2023 Volume 75 Number 6

## Member Appreciation Events Scheduled for Late Summer and Fall >>>

At Crow Wing Power, we believe in the power of community and the importance of connecting with our members. That's why we are delighted to extend a warm invitation to upcoming events we'll be attending and the appreciation events we have planned just for you.

### National Night Out in Baxter and Pequot Lakes

National Night Out is an event held by police departments promoting police-community partnerships within neighborhoods across the nation. Crow Wing Power Line crews will be in attendance giving \*bucket rides at two local communities. Pequot Lake's event will be held in Trailside Park on Tuesday, August 1 and Baxter's event will be at Oscar Kristofferson Park a week later on Tuesday, August 8. Both will be held from 5-8 p.m.

### Music in the Park, Crosby

Join us and others as we listen to Amanda Standalong & Crooked Country at Crosby Memorial Park on Thursday, August 24 from 5-8 p.m. \*Bucket rides and giveaways will be provided by Crow Wing Power. The event will also have food trucks available.

### Celebrating YOU at the Zoo

Back again this year, Crow Wing Power has partnered with cooperative member Safari North Wildlife Park just south of Brainerd to provide free admission to all Crow Wing Power member families! This event brought joy to members of all



ages last year and we are looking forward to seeing smiles again this year. Save the date for the weekend of September 16 & 17. Members can simply show up and Crow Wing Power employees will provide wristbands for free admission.

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### Cooperative Member Pancake Breakfast

A new twist on a longtime tradition, our annual pancake breakfast is going to be held during October, Cooperative Month. We invite you to connect with us close to your home for breakfast.

This simultaneous event will be held at three locations, Brainerd American Legion, Crosslake American Legion, and The Red Rooster in Genola (just south of Pierz). Members can enjoy pancakes, sausage and juice or coffee between 8-10 a.m. on the first Saturday in October, the 7th.

Keep an eye on your member communications, our website at [cwpower.com](http://cwpower.com) or any of Crow Wing Power's social media platforms for updates on upcoming events. Together, let's celebrate the power of community and your Cooperative.

*\*Bucket rides are dependent on availability of linemen and clear skies.*

## 2024 CO-OP CALENDAR CONTEST

Capture stunning landscapes within Crow Wing Power's service territory. Members can submit up to five nature-focused photos for a chance to win \$25 in bill credits. Submit photos by September 29 at [cwpower.com/events](http://cwpower.com/events).



# A WORD FROM YOUR CEO

## Grid-Connected Solar Systems Numbers Are Increasing >>>

Summer is here in full swing, new service builds are active and we're seeing an uptake in solar applications and installations in our service area. It's possible solar interest is just naturally increasing, however it's highly likely the recent boost in government tax credits and incentives may be playing a large role in that development.

At the time this article is written, we have 130 systems connected. Three years ago, we had 11 renewable energy systems hook up to our grid; two years ago, that number increased to 16; last year, 20 were connected; and this year, we've commissioned 13 thus far with another 20 applications in the queue. The great majority are residential with two churches preparing to connect at this time.

*The number of renewable energy systems reflected here, are only systems that apply to connect to our grid.*

Luke Christensen is one of the member service representative who works with members who want to install grid-connected solar systems. According to Luke, the majority of applications are coming from the baby boomer generation in particular.

Every grid connected system that gets installed goes through a thorough inspection

process by Luke and one of our electricians before it is commissioned.

The federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), passed into law last fall, is loaded with incentives for energy efficiencies and clean energy initiatives. Federal tax credits of 30% or more are easily attainable for renewable energy systems, according to Luke. Note that those incentives could also be drawing added sales reps and installers to the area, so it's recommended to look for local contractors, get several bids and seek out testimonials that are reliable.

Our newly redesigned website has great detailed information and links to third party unbiased resources like Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTS) to help homeowners.

On page three of this newsletter there are some figures about costs, and other frequently asked questions about solar systems.

I'll keep you informed,

Bruce L. Kraemer, CEO

### April Board Meeting Highlights

Crow Wing Power's Board of Directors conducted its regular monthly meeting Thursday, April 20, 2023. 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
- 2022 Audit Report by Dave Holt of Brady Martz & Associates

The following actions were taken:

The Board approved:

- March Consent Agenda
- Minutes of the March 16, 2023 regular board meeting
- Resolution to Accept the 2022 Audit as presented
- Resolution to Allocate Margins for 2022
- Director expense reports March 2023

Members can review detailed minutes by logging into their SmartHub account. Log in is located on the homepage of our website.

### May Board Meeting Highlights

Crow Wing Power's Board of Directors conducted its regular monthly meeting Thursday, May 18, 2023. 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:

- April Consent Agenda
- Minutes of the April 20, 2023 regular board meeting
- Director expense reports April 2023

Members can review detailed minutes by logging into their SmartHub account. Log in is located on the homepage of our website.

## Three Board Incumbents Re-Elected >>>



The 2023 Annual Business Meeting for the Cooperative was held on Saturday, June 17 at Arrowwood Lodge in Baxter. The annual meeting is the culmination of the board results from the 2023 election.

A total of 5,594 ballots were cast in this year's election – 5,065 through mail-in voting and 529 electronically. The number of members voting online is still only 10%, but this is only our second year offering it.

In District 1 At-Large, incumbent Bryan McCulloch was elected with 2,458 votes over, Lance Bragstad with 1,179 votes, Lee Midthun with 1,063 votes and Michael Rancour with 843 votes.

Incumbent Gert Roggenkamp was elected as District 2B Director with 2,585 votes over Thomas Lillehei with 1,718 votes and Gary Bakken with 1,239 votes.

In District 3A, incumbent Dwight Thiesse was elected with 2,947 votes over Loren Beilke who received 2,582 votes.

Members and guests of Crow Wing Power listened to updates from the Cooperative's leadership team. Bruce Kraemer, CEO; Eric Quale, COO; and Susannah Jensen, CFO reflected on last year's financial highlights.

More information about the results of the election and a recap of the annual business meeting can be found at [cwpower.com](http://cwpower.com)



## Newly Redesigned Website Launched >>>

We are pleased to announce the launch of our newly redesigned website, aimed at providing you, our valued cooperative members, with knowledge and information geared toward your energy needs. With a fresh look and intuitive navigation, [cwwpower.com](http://cwwpower.com) is now more user-friendly.

One of the exciting additions to our website is our new blog, where we will be sharing valuable insights, energy-saving tips, industry news, and cooperative happenings. As energy experts we want to be your go-to resource for everything energy. We hope our blog will provide you with valuable content to help you make informed energy decisions.

We invite you to explore our new website and discover the wealth of resources available at your fingertips. Whether you're looking for energy efficiency tips, information on programs and rebates, or to learn more about your electric account, [cwwpower.com](http://cwwpower.com) is your comprehensive source.



**CWPOWER.COM**

## Social Media Sparks Conversations about Solar Power >>>

Crow Wing Power is igniting a conversation about solar power in Minnesota this summer. Taking to social media, we've asked members about their questions, unique uses of solar power, and even shared trivia about community solar. The response has been eye opening, with people showing a keen interest in learning more about solar power.

The redesigned [cwwpower.com](http://cwwpower.com) now offers a comprehensive renewables page that can answer many of your questions. Simply visit [cwwpower.com/renewables](http://cwwpower.com/renewables) for more information.

Here are a few frequently asked questions (FAQs) that members often have about solar power: *(Facts and figures here reflect what we see in our service area.)*

### What is the average cost of a solar system?

The average cost is \$4,500 per kW without battery storage, before any incentives or credits. For example, a 10kW system would cost approximately \$45,000.

Prices typically range from \$2,500 to \$6,500 per kW.

### What is the average size of a solar system?

The average size of a system connected to our grid is 12kW.

### What does Crow Wing Power pay for energy put back (buy back) on the grid (Net Metering) in 2023?

Residential members receive a rate of .113/kWh.

Small commercial members receive a rate of .112/kWh.

Large commercial members receive a rate of .054/kWh.

### How much power do solar panels provide?

The power output depends on the panel's rating, but on average, panels generate 300-450 watts per panel.

### How much can you save per month?

Monthly savings vary depending on the system. A great resource for estimating savings is [pvwatts.nrel.gov](http://pvwatts.nrel.gov).

### On average, how long does it take for the system to "pay for itself" in energy savings?

Systems that benefit from the federal tax credit typically recoup their cost in approximately 11 to 15 years.

## Solar Power Beyond Buildings

While solar power may not be suitable for every home or business, Crow Wing Power encourages members to think creatively about how they can harness the sun's energy. Members have shared various innovative uses for solar power, such as charging dock lifts, trolling motor batteries, cell phones, outdoor lighting, electric fences, and even electric vehicles.

If you're unable to utilize solar power on a smaller scale or install a solar system, Crow Wing Power has you covered. We have built three Community Solar arrays. The Phase III array, commissioned in April 2022, still has shares available. Cooperative members can purchase solar share production credits and receive credit on their monthly electric bills based on their share of the electricity produced (an average of \$5 credit per month per share).

For more information about purchasing shares or any other inquiries, please contact Member Services.



# Plug into the power of your money.

CROW WING POWER  
**CREDIT UNION**



 NCUA  
NMLS# 408088

## Backup Generator Alert

Last year's storms have ignited a new interest in backup power generators. If not hooked up properly they can be dangerous even fatal to line workers. Go to [cwpower.com](http://cwpower.com)'s blog for important information!

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Editor: Char Kinzer

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## 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  
Bryan McCulloch .....218-821-8390  
LuAnn Nelson .....612-400-4627  
Giles Radtke.....218-839-9182  
Gert Roggenkamp.....218-562-4566  
Mark Ronnei .....218-831-8373  
Dwight Thiesse.....218-831-8605

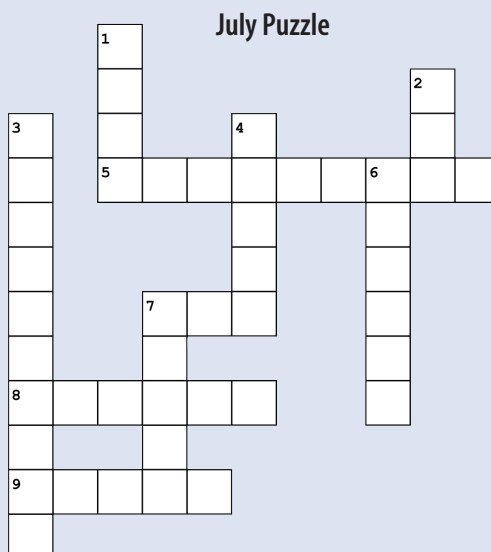
## Puzzlers - Enter to Win One of Three \$25 bill credits! >>>

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

• Scan and email to [info@cwpower.com](mailto:info@cwpower.com) • Mail it with bill • Online at [cwpower.com](http://cwpower.com) - click membership - Current Connection newsletter - July Online Puzzle.

*March Winners: Milo Gramm, Backus, MN; Michael Kucza, Andover, MN; William Lerach, Oakdale, MN*

### July Puzzle



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Acct number \_\_\_\_\_

### July Puzzle Clues:

#### ACROSS

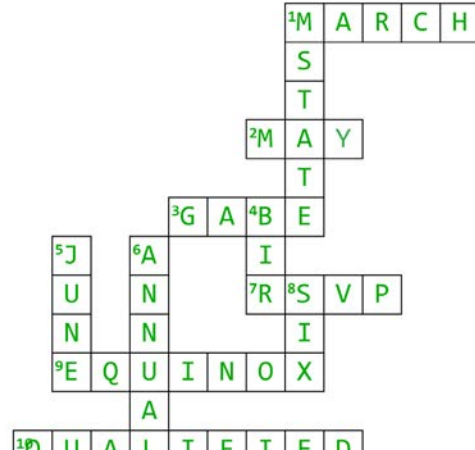
- If not hooked up properly they can be fatal
- Percentage of members voting online
- There are 130 renewable \_\_\_\_\_ systems connected
- We have built this many Community Solar arrays

#### DOWN

- New addition to website
- Zoo admission is good for \_\_\_\_\_ days
- All three elected Board members were \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of Community Event locations
- Tax credit percentage for renewable energy systems
- New pancake breakfasts will be in \_\_\_\_\_ locations

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

### MARCH PUZZLE ANSWERS



1 M A R C H  
S  
T  
2 M A Y  
T  
3 G A 4 B E  
5 J 6 A I  
U N 7 R 8 S V P  
N N I  
9 E Q U I N O X  
A  
10 U A L I F I E D