

Current CONNECTION



September/October • Volume 76 • Number 5
A Bi-Monthly Publication of Crow Wing Power

CURRENT CORNER

The Critical Role of Energy Policy and Infrastructure Development

GO PAPERLESS

Switch to Simplicity and WIN!

MEMBER APPRECIATION!

Visit the Zoo or have a Pancake Breakfast!

TAKE OUR SURVEY

Your opinion matters to us!

PREPARING FOR WINTER

Budgeting for Your Electric Bill

As winter approaches, managing your energy usage and budgeting for your electric bill becomes crucial. According to Move.org, the average electric bill in the nation is \$135.25 per month. At Crow Wing Power, we understand the impact this has on your household finances, especially during the colder months, and are committed to helping you keep your home warm and your bills manageable.

Electricity remains a great value in today's market. The average daily cost of electricity is \$4.57, which is less than the cost of a latte. To put this into perspective, the cost of one cup of coffee equates to thirty-eight hours of brewing at home.

We also encourage you to adopt energy-saving practices to help lower your monthly expenses. Simple actions such as sealing windows and doors, adjusting your thermostat, and using energy-efficient appliances can make a significant difference. For more tips and resources on how to save energy, please visit cwpower.com/energy-experts.

One way to simplify managing your electric bill is by joining our Go Paperless campaign. By opting to receive your bill through email instead of traditional mail, you can save both time and money. Plus, as an added incentive, we will be selecting three paperless members in December to WIN a Samsung tablet!

In Minnesota, we adhere to the Cold Weather Rule as outlined in MN State Statute 216B.097. This rule is designed to protect members from disconnection during the winter season if specific criteria are met. However, it's important to remember that this does not entirely exempt members from service disconnection. To help you stay current with your bills, we offer seven convenient payment options tailored to fit various lifestyles.

Automatic Payments: Ensure your bill is paid on time, every time, by setting up automatic payments.

PayNOW: Make quick payments online without needing a SmartHub account.

SmartHub: Manage and pay your bills through your SmartHub account, on your desktop or mobile device.

Pay by Phone: Use our new number to pay your electric bill over the phone.

Prepay: Pay your bill in advance to better manage your budget.

Pay by Mail: Send your payment through the mail, *note the increase in postage and delay in delivery on occasion.*

In-Person Payments: Visit our cooperative office to pay your bill in person.

At Crow Wing Power, we care about our members and are dedicated to providing the support and resources needed to manage your energy usage effectively.

Source: <https://www.move.org/utility-bills-101/>

The Cold Weather Rule, under Minnesota State Statute 216B.097, protects residential utility customers during the cold winter months. Under this rule, your electric service will not be disconnected from October 1 through April 30 if you meet ALL of the Cold Weather Rule requirements including:

- You declare an inability to pay.
- Your total household, not individual, income is less than 50% of the state median income. You must provide the necessary documentation to support this condition.

If you do not meet all these listed conditions, then you do not qualify for the winter shut-off protection. However, you can continue to receive electric service if you call us to make a mutually acceptable payment arrangement.



ATTENTION MEMBERS!

Crow Wing Power's Pay-By-Phone number is changing! Effective **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8**, please use our new number for all Pay-By-Phone transactions:

855-941-3593

THE Current Corner

ENSURING RELIABLE AND AFFORDABLE ELECTRICITY:

The Critical Role of Energy Policy and Infrastructure Development

A hot-button topic that I'd like to inform you about is the escalating issue of increased demand of electricity and its impact on grid reliability. Our mission has always been to provide safe, reliable, and affordable power to our members. However, we face significant challenges in fulfilling this promise due to rapidly growing demand, diminishing supply, and public policy.

Demand is surging, largely driven by the rapid growth of data centers. The Energy Information Administration (EIA) projects that power demand will reach record highs in 2024 and 2025, with increases of 2.5% and 3.2%, respectively. Furthermore, grid planners forecast a peak demand growth of 38 gigawatts through 2028, which is equivalent to adding another California to our grid.

Meanwhile, our nation's electricity supply is decreasing. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) has highlighted that more than 110 gigawatts of always-available generation will retire by 2033. This significant reduction in supply puts parts of 19 states, spanning from Montana to Louisiana, at high risk of rolling blackouts during peak conditions over the next five years.

Energy policy plays a critical role in this scenario. NERC has warned that energy policy, particularly timelines for implementation, can be a reliability risk factor. Current U.S. energy policies often fail to adequately consider the impacts on grid resiliency and reliability, exacerbating the challenges we face.

In response, electric cooperatives across the country, alongside the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), are advocating for common-sense policies that

balance the growing demand with grid reliability. We believe that energy policy should support the development of new infrastructure and technologies while ensuring that the existing grid remains stable and resilient. Your support for energy conservation efforts and staying informed about energy policy is encouraged and greatly appreciated.

Crow Wing Power is dedicated to cutting carbon emissions and adhering to new state and federal mandates, but we must also prioritize the reliability and affordability of electric service for our members. As a member of the National Rural Electric Association and the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, we advocate for sound energy policy and actively participate in local and regional government affairs. We will continue to keep you informed about our cooperative's business and relevant state energy policies.

Electric cooperatives understand the importance of providing reliable and affordable electricity to local families and businesses. While we support the transition to clean energy technologies, it is crucial to balance these with always-available generation sources to ensure a stable electric grid. Crow Wing Power, along with other cooperatives, delivers power to 42 million Americans. Our top priority is to meet our members' energy needs, and reliable electricity is essential to achieving that goal.



Sincerely,

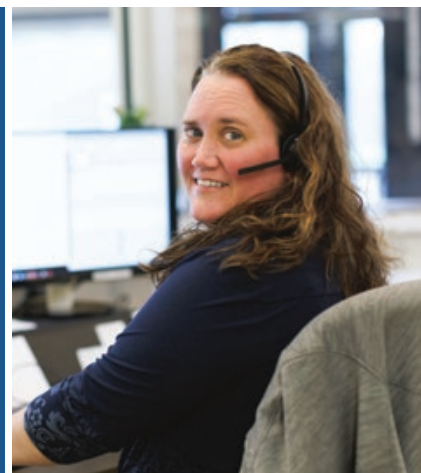
Eric Quale | *Interim Chief Executive Officer*



Value Beyond the Power
human connection



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



GO PAPERLESS:

Switch to Simplicity

From August 1 to November 31, we're excited to invite you to experience the simplicity of going paperless. By making the switch, you'll enjoy the convenience of receiving your electric bill directly in your inbox, accessible anytime, anywhere, without the clutter of paper bills. Not only is this option more convenient, but it's also secure—your personal information will be protected with

SmartHub, our secure online account management tool. Additionally, by going paperless, you're making a positive impact on the environment by helping to reduce paper waste.

Switching is quick and easy, taking just a few clicks. Join your fellow members who are already benefiting from the simplicity and efficiency of paperless billing, and be part of the change for a better tomorrow.



Scan me to get started!

As an added incentive, if you switch to paperless billing between August and November 2024, you'll be entered into a drawing to **WIN A \$25 BILL CREDIT**. And in December, all paperless members will have the chance to **WIN ONE OF THREE SAMSUNG GALAXY TAB A9 TABLETS**. It's our way of thanking you for helping us move toward a greener future.



CELEBRATE YOU AT THE ZOO!

FREE EVENT for MEMBERS

September 21 or 22, 2024

at Safari North Wildlife Park
Enjoy free admission, exclusive park discounts, and a day filled with wildlife wonders. Thank you for your loyalty and support!

WHO CAN JOIN

CROW WING POWER
CREDIT UNION

CROW WING POWER:

- > Members
- > Employees
- > Immediate Family

PEOPLE'S SECURITY:

- > Customers
- > Employees

Open an account today!

CROW WING POWER
CREDIT UNION
877-563-3072 cwpcu.org

Board Meeting HIGHLIGHTS

MAY

Crow Wing Power's Board of Directors conducted its regular monthly meeting Thursday, May 16, 2024. A quorum of directors was present.

President Mark Ronnei opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following reports were given:

- Finance Committee Report
- 2023 Audit Report by Dave Holt of Brady Martz & Associates

The following actions were taken:

- Adopted Policy No. 343 Policy Regarding Limited Release of Service Address Date for Director Election Purposes.
- Approved May Consent Agenda.
- Approved Minutes of the April 18, 2024 regular board meeting.
- Approved Minutes of the April 19, 2024 special board meeting.
- Approved revision to Policy No. 330 Community and Economic Development Program.
- Approved an Economic Development Loan.
- Approved a Resolution Authorizing Execution and Delivery of Agreements with Great River Energy.
- Approved Resolution to Accept the 2023 Audit as presented.
- Approved Resolution to Allocate Margins for 2023.
- Approved Director expense reports April 2024.

JUNE

The following reports were given:

- CEO report

The following actions were taken:

- Approved June Consent Agenda.
- Approved Minutes of the May 16, 2024 regular board meeting.
- Approved Minutes of the May 31, 2024 special board meeting.
- Approved Account Authorization Changes.
- Approved RUS Authorization Changes.
- Approved Engagement Letter with HPExpertiseBP for CEO Search.
- Approved Director expense reports May 2024.

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



CWPower.com

MEMBER APPRECIATION Pancake breakfast

Saturday, October 5 • 8–10AM

Brainerd American Legion
708 Front St, Brainerd

Crosslake American Legion
35112 Co Rd 3, Crosslake

Red Rooster Pierz
25932 Meadow Lark Rd, Genola



Join us for this **FREE EVENT** hosted to express our gratitude for your continued support throughout the year!

Crow Wing Power Member Appreciation Events SURVEY

We value your feedback! Please take a few moments to answer the following questions to help us plan our future member appreciation events.

Which of the following events have you attended in the past?

Select all that apply:

- EV Ride & Drive
- Celebrate YOU at the ZOO
- Pancake Breakfast
- Holiday Open House
- Youth Education (career fairs, safety demos)
- I haven't attended any events
- Community Events (National Night Out, Music in the Park, Brainerd Lakes Home Show)

How would you rate your overall experience at the events you attended? Circle the rating:



What type of event(s) would you be most interested in attending in the future?

Select all that apply:

- Family Friendly outings (e.g. zoo trips, park days)
- Educational/Interactive demonstrations (e.g. energy-forums, electrical safety, EV Ride & Drive)
- Social gatherings (e.g. picnics, holiday open house)
- Community service activities (e.g. clean-up days, volunteer opportunities)
- Other (please specify)

What factors are most important to you when deciding whether to attend an event?

Select all that apply:

- Location
- Time & Date
- Type of activity
- Opportunities for family involvement
- Socializing with other members
- Opportunities to learn about energy/electric industry
- Other (please specify): _____

I would like to be included in the drawing for a bill credit: Yes No

Name _____

Address _____

Account # _____

Complete this survey and send back by Oct. 15 for a chance to win one of three \$25 bill credits!

Three easy ways: Complete survey by scanning the QR code; mail in with your bill; visit cwpower.com/news > online puzzles.

July winners: John Hertzog of Winsted, MN • Terry Lind of Lakeville, MN • Jerry Kulus of Fort Ripley, MN



**Publication of
Crow Wing Power**
218.829.2827
800.648.9401
www.cwpower.com

EDITOR

Jenna Anderson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dave Albers 651-249-3127
Jon Lubke 218-232-2124
Paul Koering..... 218-851-9954
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

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.

PREVIOUS MONTH PUZZLE ANSWERS:

Across: 1. MutualAid 3. Baxter 4. Two 5. Three 6. Fifty 9. Municipal 10. Pancakes
Down: 2. Interconnection 7. Windprojects 8. Kangas