



CURRENT CONNECTION

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Meet the Cooperative Members Behind the Lens >>>

The awe-inspiring photos in our 2024 Member Calendar certainly meet or exceed the quality of nature snapshots we've received from members over the years.

This year will mark the seventh year we've solicited nature photographs from our Cooperative members. During those years, we've gotten familiar with some of the names of the camera buffs whose photographs adorn our calendars year after year. We thought it might be fun to meet some of them.

Meet Dianne Johnson. This year, three of her photo submissions were voted in to win a place in our 2024 calendar. Her green frog snapshot with an insect sitting on its shoulder was a sure win for the front cover. A hummingbird hovering suspended in air shows off every detail of the tiny bird for the month of July and



an early morning foggy view of canoes along the banks of the Nokassippi River won our member choice for October.

She and her husband are retired and have been Cooperative members for over 40 years.

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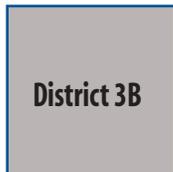
Three Director Positions Open for Filing >>>



Bob Kangas



LuAnn Nelson

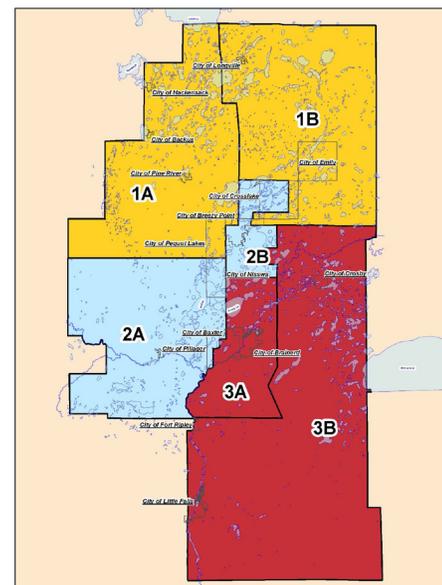


Vacant

Filing opens February 1 for the upcoming Director elections for 2024, with three open positions across various districts. Currently, Bob Kangas holds the Director position for District 1A, residing in the Pine River area, while LuAnn Nelson from the Crosslake Area serves the At-Large role for District 2. District 3B board seat is currently vacant, as former Director Ric Larson moved out of that district.

The filing period for candidacy is open from February 1 until April 16, 2024. Interested members can file for any of the open positions until 4:30 p.m. on April 16, 2024. To qualify, members must reside or own real estate receiving service from Crow Wing Power in Districts 1A, 2 At-Large (combined 2A and 2B), or 3B.

Ballots for the Director elections will be mailed in May to all members, offering options for in-person returns at Crow Wing Power, voting by mail, or electronic online voting. The voting process will conclude on the morning of our Annual Business Meeting, scheduled for June 15, 2024, at Forest View Middle School, where the elected directors will be announced. Should you be interested in running or have inquiries about the process, please reach out to Crow Wing Power at 218-829-2827 or 1-800-648-9401.





A WORD FROM YOUR CEO

Economic Pressures Cause Rate Adjustments for 2024 >>>

Crow Wing Power has been fortunate to have been able to maintain stable rates with no changes for the past five years, during which we benefited from major membership growth and weather factors, which resulted in healthy kilowatt hour sales.

However, kilowatt-hour sales have slowed and the inflationary impact on the price of energy and critical electrical distribution equipment is causing a projected budget shortfall in 2024. That reality is causing us to make necessary rate adjustments to enable us to meet the service needs of our Cooperative.

The Board of Directors spent a day in November at their annual review session understanding every aspect of our 2024 budget needs and learned where we could postpone expenses or make adjustments. After careful consideration, they approved the budget at their November Board meeting, knowing rate adjustments would be needed.

Management and staff presented a plan of action at the December Board meeting, where it was determined that adjusting both the basic service charge, currently referred to as the Service Availability Charge, and the kilowatt hour energy rate would serve the best

interests of all members and contribute to the sustained health of the Cooperative.

These adjustments will take effect on March 1 and be reflected on April bills for March's electric use. The board felt that this would contribute to easing the challenges associated with higher demand during the winter months.

The average residential member will see a 9.3% increase. That average is based on a predicted residential household using 860 kWh/month, but will vary greatly depending on the home's energy use.

The basic monthly service charge for residential members will adjust from \$24.00 to \$29.50. The energy rate will have a slight change from 10.9¢ to 11.45¢/kilowatt hour (kWh).

Depending on weather factors and kilowatt hour sales, the summer PCA could also adjust from .05¢/kWh to 2.5¢/kWh (for June, July and August) when wholesale power costs are higher.

I'll keep you informed,

Bruce L. Kraemer, CEO

October Board Meeting Highlights

Crow Wing Power's Board of Directors conducted its regular monthly meeting Thursday, October 19, 2023. A quorum of directors was present. President Mark Ronnei opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following reports were given:

- CEO report
- Finance Committee report
- Director shared highlights of meetings attended on behalf of the cooperative

The following actions were taken:

- Approve Board Policy No. 114
- 2024 Annual Business Meeting date, location and time.
- Approve distribution of Unclaimed Capital Credits.
- Accept and approve filing of Form 990 and 990T.

The Board approved:

- October Consent Agenda
- Minutes of the September 21, 2023 regular board meeting
- Director expense reports September 2023

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

November Board Meeting Highlights

Crow Wing Power's Board of Directors conducted its regular monthly meeting Thursday, November 16, 2023. A quorum of directors was present.

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

The following reports were given:

- CEO report
- Finance Committee report
- 2022 Service Reliability Study
- Director shared highlights of meetings attended on behalf of the cooperative

The following actions were taken:

- Approve Operation Round Up Board Candidate
- Approve 2024 Operating Budget

The Board approved:

- November Consent Agenda
- Minutes of the October 19, 2023 regular board meeting
- Director expense reports October 2023

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

December minutes will be available after approval in January.

Your energy dollar - Projected for 2024



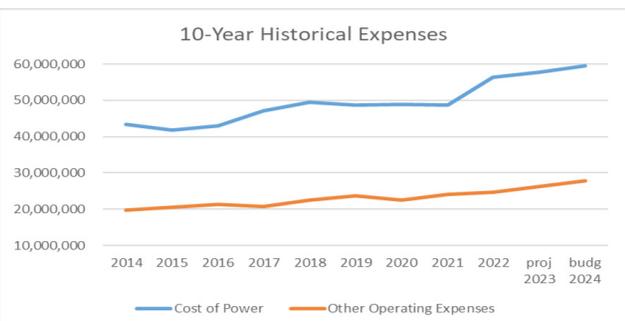
65.2% Purchased Power

19.2% Maintenance and Operating Expense

4.3% Operating Margin

As a not-for-profit Cooperative, we keep our margins low.

11.3% Interest and Depreciation Expense



>> This dollar graphic depicts where your dollar will be spent, based on projections for 2024. Purchased power from our wholesale power suppliers has always been a very large percentage and over the years it continues to grow. We strive to keep our operating margins as low as possible, as a not-for-profit Cooperative.

>> Maintenance and operating expenses have remained relatively stable for many years, but equipment costs are rising.

Calendar Winners Continued >>>



Jennifer Quam is no stranger to our calendars. Her winning photographs have found their way in many of them over the years. This year, Cooperative members chose two of her photos – a huge blood moon for August and two deer, ears perked looking straight at the camera for the month of December.



David Bredehoff's fluffy great horned baby owl won a special place in the month of March. David has been taking photos for about 25 years and he and his wife have had the fortune to have been able to travel abroad as birders to satisfy their appetite for capturing wildlife.



They have been members of our Cooperative for 30 years.



Members have come to recognize photographs taken by Ken Thommes, who says he's had a passion for nature photography for 35 years. This year's month of November features his capture of a strong muscular buck scraping his antlers in the woods on fall day.



Ken's been a loyal Cooperative member for 45 years.

Doug Scott – oh yes, another recognizable name in Crow Wing Power calendars. For 2024, Doug's shot of a majestic eagle perched in a soft white pine won a place for the month of April, but over the years we've been fortunate to publish numerous photos he's captured in his yard. Memorable photos from the past include a baby fox and a deer with her fawn.



Doug volunteers at an assisted living home, where he donates photos for the residents to enjoy.



Tom Martin's photos snagged three places in the 2024 calendar with his capture of swans on a semi-frozen pond, a mother goose with goslings and a beautiful fall lake reflection. Tom has three Nikon cameras with different lenses but says the cell phone's worked well when he doesn't have his cameras with him.



Tom and his wife have been longtime Cooperative members since 1983.

Bonnie Finn has a favorite pastime of sitting still waiting for that perfect loon shot with her camera or cell phone and she captured one that members selected for the month of June.



She and her husband have a lake cabin and have been members of Crow Wing Power for 20 years.



Unfortunately each year, there's only room for 13 photos – 12 months and a cover. We receive at least 50 awesome photographs.

We gather the photos and put them on Facebook for members to vote on which ones to publish. Those that aren't selected are organized in a slide show of honorable mentions with photos that are certainly worthy and award winning in nature. We share that on social media. To view them, visit Crow Wing Power's YouTube channel.

Thank you to our fabulous members who submit their nature photographs. It reminds us what a great place we live in, here in Central Minnesota!

To find out more about these photographers, see many other photos they've sent, learn what kind of cameras they use and see other members' photos from other years, go to cwpower.com, select the 'Your Cooperative' tab and click Blog.



UPGRADE UNLOCKED

SmartHub Enhanced

New Experience, Same SmartHub

A simplified yet enhanced SmartHub is here on February 1!

Learn more at cwpower.com



IMPACT GRANT

Applications due March 31, 2024.

Awarded to worthy applicants in amounts up to \$12,000, to give a boost to a unique project/program to ensure its success.

Apply online at cwpower.com

Scholarship

Applications due March 31, 2024.



As a part of our commitment to communities we serve, we want to help make attending college more affordable for our students.

Visit cwpower.com/scholarships to learn about how to apply!



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

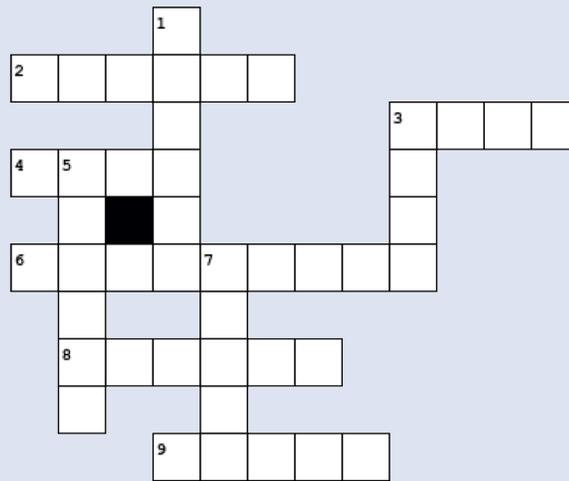
Complete the bi-monthly crossword puzzle and send it back to us by February 15.

- Scan and email to info@cwpower.com
- Mail it with bill
- Online at cwpower.com - click 'Your Co-op' newsletter - January Online Puzzle.

November Winners: Charlotte Kastanek of Hillman, Eric Tiemann of Royalton & Ross Seifert of Hutchinson



January Puzzle



Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Acct number _____

CURRENT CONNECTION

Monthly Publication of Crow Wing Power

Publication of
Crow Wing Power
218-829-2827
800-648-9401
www.cwpower.com

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 Koering218-851-9954
- Bryan McCulloch218-821-8390
- LuAnn Nelson.....612-400-4627
- Giles Radtke.....218-839-9182
- Gert Roggenkamp.....218-562-4566
- Mark Ronnei218-831-8373
- Dwight Thiesse.....218-831-8605

January Puzzle Clues:

ACROSS

- \$12,000 grant open to apply for.
- Front cover of 2024 Calendar.
- Click on this to read an expanded article on calendar entries.
- LuAnn Nelson lives here.
- In addition to mail-in ballots, you can vote this way.
- Number of calendar photographers featured.

DOWN

- Current Director for District 1A.
- Rates have remained unchanged for _____ years.
- Former Director moved leaving District vacant.
- Type of show created for honorable mention photos.

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

NOVEMBER PUZZLE ANSWERS

