



**Wright-Hennepin**  
Cooperative Electric Association

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# Hotline Update

NEWS FOR WRIGHT-HENNEPIN MEMBERS

October 2024



## YOU'RE INVITED TO THE WH FALL FESTIVAL!

**October 24, 5 – 7 p.m.**

Join in the Co-op Month fun:

- Pumpkin decorating\*
- Inflatable slide
- Balloons\*\*
- Magician
- Line truck
- Snacks and drinks\*

\*While supplies last.

\*\*Balloon animals are for kids age 3 and up.

## Celebrate Co-op Month

October is Co-op Month, celebrated annually by cooperatives across the country. Wright-Hennepin (WH) hosted a member lunch October 14, and invites members to the Fall Festival Thursday, October 24 at our Rockford headquarters.

Why does it matter if you're part of a cooperative? As someone who receives electricity from WH, you're a member, not a customer. Because WH is a not-for-profit organization, our goal is to provide safe, reliable, affordable power at the cost of service.

The cooperative difference also allows for things like capital credit refunds (read more about those below!), community involvement, and dedicated member service from real people in your community.

The Board of Directors, which guides WH's direction and policies, is made up of WH members. They're elected by other WH members at the Annual Meeting.



Members enjoyed hamburgers at last year's Member Lunch too!

### What happens at the Annual Meeting?

Learn more at [bit.ly/WH-AnnualMeeting](https://bit.ly/WH-AnnualMeeting)

### YOU ARE A MEMBER-OWNER OF WH

## Capital credit refunds

WH will provide members — like you — a capital credit refund during the upcoming holiday season!

WH is built on the cooperative business model, so because you get your electricity from WH, you're a member, not a customer! Capital credits are one of the many benefits of being part of a cooperative.

Unlike at investor-owned utilities like Xcel, there are no investors making a profit off your WH electric bill! That means money left over after WH pays bills or completes capital projects gets returned to you — WH members!

WH has returned capital credits for 44 consecutive years.

If you wish to receive your capital credit refund as a bill credit instead of a check, call WH at (763) 477-3000 or fill out the form at [bit.ly/WH-capital-credit-refunds](https://bit.ly/WH-capital-credit-refunds) by November 15. If you have previously opted to receive your refund as a bill credit, you do not need to register again.



WH tracks the amount of electricity you use and pay for throughout the year.



At the end of the year, WH determines if there is excess revenue, called margins.



WH allocates the margins as 'capital credits' to you, based on how much electricity you've used.



When WH's financial condition permits, your Board of Directors decides to pay, or retire, the capital credits.



WH will notify you when you will receive your capital credits.

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### Fire Safety Month

PREVENT FIRES WITH THESE TIPS

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### Cold Weather Rule

IN EFFECT OCTOBER 1 - APRIL 30

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### Considering an EV?

CHARGE UP YOUR EV KNOWLEDGE

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### File for Board seats

DISTRICTS 4, 6, 8 UP FOR ELECTION



# CEO's Memo

TIM SULLIVAN  
WH PRESIDENT AND CEO

## Cooperatives Empower People and Business Across the Globe

National Cooperative Month in October brings attention to and recognition of the remarkable — and often underrated — contributions cooperatives make to our community, state, nation and world. How significant are those contributions? Consider a few facts, starting globally and finishing locally:

- An amazing 12% of the people worldwide are served by one or more of 3 million cooperatives, according to the International Cooperative Alliance. Globally, cooperatives are a \$2.4 trillion economic engine.
- The top 100 cooperatives in the U.S. generate an incredible \$319 billion in revenue annually. Two of the nation's three largest — CHS Inc. (first) and Land O'Lakes (third) — are headquartered in Twin Cities suburbs.
- The electric cooperative network alone contributes \$111 billion to the U.S. gross domestic product, according to a 2023 report commissioned by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).
- Minnesota cooperatives are alone responsible for almost \$11 billion in state economic activity, according to a 2023 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Report.
- Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association (WH) and our subsidiaries generate about \$125 million in revenue a year, most of which is spent in area communities. Moreover, our electricity — the necessary lifeblood of modern American commerce — powers hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity and supports thousands of jobs in our two-county footprint.

**A Study in Diversity:** Cooperatives thrive across a wide variety of U.S. economic sectors, most prominently in agriculture followed by finance, grocery, energy, hardware, housing and others. In fact, you may be surprised to learn just how frequently you and your family interact with cooperative-produced products and services.

If you bought a hammer at Ace or True Value Hardware, you've purchased from a cooperative. So too, if you consume Land O'Lakes butter, Ocean Spray fruit juice, American Crystal sugar or Blue Diamond almonds. If you shop at REI, you're a cooperative member. Belong to a credit union? That's a cooperative too.

**Powerfully Connected:** To demonstrate just how interconnected co-ops are, consider how the power you receive from WH cools the Land O'Lakes butter in your refrigerator, keeps the lights on at your local REI outlet and enables you to conduct an electronic transaction over the internet with your credit union.

**What Makes a Cooperative?** Given the wide variety of products, services and sectors, what do cooperatives all have in common? The short answer: cooperatives are owned by those who use their product or service. They are owned by their members, not by shareholders. Cooperatives are private, not public, entities. They are also not-for-profit businesses — neither non-profit

organizations (e.g. charities) nor traditional for-profit businesses. In fact, cooperatives have their own unique Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax designation — a 501(c)(12).

Perhaps most importantly, cooperatives all share the Seven Cooperative Principles. I've highlighted those principles at length in this column before, but stated briefly, they are:

1. **Voluntary and open membership**
2. **Democratic member control, with each member having one vote**
3. **Economic participation by members**
4. **Autonomy and independence**
5. **Education, training and information**
6. **Cooperation among cooperatives, and**
7. **Concern for community**

**A Robust Employer:** Of course, in addition to all the economic activity, cooperatives are also robust employers. The International Cooperative Alliance estimates that 10% of the world's employed population — an eye-popping 280 million people across the globe — are either employed by or ultimately supported in their employment by a cooperative. NRECA estimates that the electric cooperative network nationally — in addition to providing electric service to 42 million people — provides 168,000 jobs directly and 623,000 indirectly. And the same report confirms that, because electric cooperatives require so many highly skilled positions, the average annual compensation totals \$82,671 per worker. In turn, the federal government collects \$8 billion in annual tax revenue and state and local governments collect \$19 billion annually thanks to U.S. electric cooperatives.

**The Cooperative Advantage:** But the ultimate measure of cooperative impact comes down to what you experience at the end of the line as a member. For WH, your membership means you have a voice in who is elected to your Board of Directors. Your

membership means you enjoy a capital credit refund check or bill credit when revenues exceed costs. And your membership means you can be the proud and valued owner of a local company that provides you with the essential, live-changing power of electricity 24/7/365.

So, please celebrate National Cooperative Month with us! We think you've earned it!

Thank you for your business.

BY DELIVERING GOOD VALUE FOR THE MONEY

**WH strives to be  
your ideal utility!**





## WH Director earns certificate

WH Board Director Pat Bakeberg (District 3 — Waverly) recently received his Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) Certificate through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

To earn this certificate, directors must attend five courses and successfully complete a learning assessment for each. The five courses include: Director Duties and Liabilities, Understanding the Electric Business, Board Operations and Process, Strategic Planning, and Financial Decision Making.

The CCD certificate provides directors with governance skills, as well as a solid foundation in the cooperative business model and seven core cooperative principles.

One of the key strengths of NRECA is its commitment to education and professional development. NRECA represents more than 900 member-owned electric cooperatives in 47 states across the country.

WH Directors are elected by members in the district they represent. The Board of Directors sets WH's long-term goals and strategies. Learn more about the Board at [bit.ly/WH-leadership](https://bit.ly/WH-leadership).



## School electric safety demos

Did you know WH's Energy Use Consultants visit schools and community events to teach kids about electric safety? They do about 50 safety demonstrations each year! To set up a presentation for your classroom or group, call (763) 477-3000, or visit [bit.ly/WHsafetydemo](https://bit.ly/WHsafetydemo).

## Winter construction charges

New electric services run to a home, outbuilding, or other facility between October 15 and April 15 may result in additional winter charges. These charges apply due to the higher costs and additional steps of construction during winter conditions. Please contact New Services or Engineering at (763) 477-3150 for more information.

## Power outage?

Get alerted when the power goes out and when it comes back on.

Log in through your WH bill pay account, then go to My Account at the top of the page and click MyMeter!



## October is Fire Safety Month

These easy tips can help prevent fires in your home:





# Co-op Connections deal of the month

NATIONS LENDING, ELK RIVER, MN

**\$1,000 discount on first mortgage**

**Lost your card? No problem.** For a free replacement or to sign up your business, call (763) 477-3000.

For more deals, visit [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop), or use the Co-op Connections app on your mobile device to find all your local deals and more!



## Cold Weather Rule notification

In accordance with Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule, electric service cannot be disconnected for nonpayment between October 1 and April 30 if electricity is the primary heat source and ALL of the following statements apply:

- Your household income is at or below 50% of the state median household income. Income may be verified on forms provided by WH or by the local energy assistance provider.
- You enter into and make reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
- You complete and file with WH an Inability to Pay form.
- You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills from WH.

### Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule does not completely stop winter disconnects.

Before disconnecting electric service to residential members between October 1 and April 30, WH must provide:

- A 30-day notice of disconnection;
- A statement of members' rights and responsibilities;
- A list of local energy assistance providers;
- Forms on which to request Cold Weather Rule protection; and
- A statement explaining available payment plans and other options to continue service.

WH does not want to disconnect service for any member, but all members suffer when a bill remains unpaid. Unpaid bills must be absorbed by members who faithfully pay their bill each month. If you cannot pay your electric bill, are having financial difficulties, or do not meet state guidelines for cold weather protection, please contact WH's credit team at (763) 477-3000 to set up a mutually acceptable payment agreement.



## Cybersecurity Awareness Month

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month. As your electric cooperative, WH is responsible for protecting your personal identifying information (PII) year-round, not just in October, and it's a job we take as seriously as providing safe, reliable, affordable power. Here are some steps you can take to protect your information online, from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

### RECOGNIZE AND REPORT PHISHING

Be cautious of unsolicited messages asking for personal information. Avoid sharing sensitive information or credentials with unknown sources. Report phishing attempts and delete the message.

### USE STRONG PASSWORDS

Strong passwords are long, random, unique, and include all four character types (uppercase, lowercase, numbers, and symbols). Password managers are a powerful tool to help you create strong passwords for each of your accounts.

### TURN ON MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

You need more than a password to protect your online accounts and enabling multi-factor authentication (MFA) makes you significantly less likely to get hacked. Enable MFA on all your online accounts that offer it, especially email, social media, and financial accounts.

### UPDATE SOFTWARE

Ensuring your software is up to date is the best way to make sure you have the latest security patches and updates on your devices. Regularly check for updates if automatic updates are not available.

**Find more tips at [cisa.gov/cybersecurity-awareness-month](https://cisa.gov/cybersecurity-awareness-month).**



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This section is required filing for WH's postal permit.

Charge up your EV knowledge with WH November 12!

This is a 'don't miss' event for WH members who are electric vehicle (EV) enthusiasts and EV curious in an informal yet highly informative, helpful and lively setting. The format is designed to educate about WH Energy-Saving Programs (ESPs) and share the 'lived experience' of EV ownership including the purchase process, rebates, getting your home ready, everyday usage, charging, cold weather, tips and tricks, and more.

**TUESDAY**  
**November 12**  
**5:30 p.m.**  
**6800 ELECTRIC DR**  
**ROCKFORD, MN**





**Notice of dual fuel testing dates**

WH switched its summer Energy-Saving Program to winter demand management on October 1. Instead of air conditioning, dual fuel heating systems will be managed during times of peak energy demand. To ensure backup heating systems turn on during periods of demand management, two tests will be completed during the month of October. The tests apply only to members who are already signed up for dual fuel. The tests will take place Thursday, October 24, and Saturday, October 26 from 6-9 p.m. both days. Testing will be done by WH and members are encouraged to ensure their backup heating systems are working during this time. If you have questions or concerns, call WH at (763) 477-3000.

Sales tax exemption for electric heating

If more than 50% of the main heat source for your residence comes from purchased electricity, you are exempt from Minnesota and local sales tax during the months of November through April. All electricity used through the same meter, whether or not for heating purposes, is tax-exempt during this six-month period. WH can provide this exemption when you complete the online form at [bit.ly/WH-tax-exemption](https://bit.ly/WH-tax-exemption), or you may call (763) 477-3000 to have a paper copy mailed to you. You do not need to re-submit the form if you have previously submitted one. If you have changed your method of heating since filling out the form, please notify us.







Keep an eye on  
all your spooky  
visitors with a video  
doorbell from  
WH Security!

WH members **save**

**\$50 off**

off an Alula video doorbell

**WHSECURITY**  
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763.477.3664 • wh-security.com



SIGN UP TODAY AND SAVE  
**\$2/month for 12  
months!**

**Quick fix.  
Fast service.  
Fair price.**

WH Appliance Repair plans are available  
to help you with unexpected repair bills  
and handle service requests 24/7/365.

Popular options include:

- ✓ Refrigerator
- ✓ Clothes washer
- ✓ Furnace
- ✓ Range
- ✓ Water heater

PLANS START AT

**\$20<sup>75</sup>**  
/month

\* Additional appliance coverage also available. Certain  
restrictions apply.

(763) 477-3000 • [whe.org/services-products.html](http://whe.org/services-products.html)

**WH Appliance**  
 **Repair**

**Trimmed trees  
are safe trees**



Safely have your trees trimmed by our  
expert tree care specialists.

**Schedule your service today!**

**Services include:**

- Pruning and shaping
- Tree removal
- Storm damage clearing
- Aerial bucket truck work
- Emerald ash borer treatment

**90-DAY**  
no-interest  
financing available!

**WH**  **TREE**  
Services

(763) 477-3000  
[whe.org](http://whe.org)



# Solar Winners

## AUGUST SOLAR WINNERS

**TOM SICHENEDER** of Hamel wins a credit for 253 kWh, July's output from one of WH's solar panel arrays.

**CARLA WEST** of Maple Grove wins a credit for 104 kWh, July's output from WH's second solar panel array.

## SEPTEMBER SOLAR WINNERS

**DUANE SCHLOSSER** of Loretto wins a credit for 241 kWh, August's output from one of WH's solar panel arrays.

**DEAN UTERMARCK** of Monticello wins a credit for 94 kWh, August's output from WH's second solar panel array.

Learn more at [bit.ly/WH-solar-contest](https://bit.ly/WH-solar-contest)

# Board Report: Meeting highlights

## AUGUST BOARD MEETING

The Wright-Hennepin and WH Holding monthly Board of Director meetings were conducted August 16, 2024. A quorum of directors was present. Items discussed or Board action taken:

- Approved Maribeth Neary to represent District 8 on the Operation Round Up Board.
- Approved a Subscriber's Agreement for Federated, WH's insurance provider.
- Approved documents and resolution for the City of Cokato's USDA Rural Development Grant.
- Heard a report on WH's approach for the use of Artificial Intelligence and approved a new policy.
- Heard a report on WH's obligation to clear danger trees in and around WH's right-of-way and approved updated policy.
- Heard a report on WH's game plan for responding to an Emergency Load Shed situation, should one arise.
- Heard a report on WH's history, views and approach towards municipal franchise fees.
- Shown a live demonstration of WH's new Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system used to control, monitor and analyze WH's substations and grid.
- Directors reported on industry meetings they attended on behalf of the cooperative.
- Reviewed and filed the monthly CEO, financial, legal and other operating reports.

## SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

The Wright-Hennepin and WH Holding monthly Board of Director meetings were conducted September 11, 2024. A quorum

of directors was present. Items discussed or Board action taken:

- Approved no changes to WH and WH Holding's 2025 director fees.
- Approved June – December 2025 meeting dates.
- Heard a report from the Policy, Planning and Professional Services (PPP) Committee. The Board:
  - » Approved no changes to WH's Bylaws.
  - » Approved no changes to reapportioning the districts.
  - » Approved appointing Legal Counsel, Survey & Ballot Systems and Auditor as Election Judges for WH's 2025 Annual Meeting.
- Participated in Annual Strategic Planning Session on September 11 – 12, 2024.
- Reviewed and filed the monthly CEO, financial, legal and other operating reports.
- Directors reported on industry meetings they attended on behalf of the cooperative.
- Guest:
  - » Eide Bailly presented the 2023 401(k) Audit. The audit was approved by the Board.

# Keep in touch with your cooperative!

## Member call center:

(763) 477-3000 or (800) 943-2667

Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Monday – Friday

## To report an outage:

Dispatchers are available 24/7

**Call:** (763) 477-3100 or (888) 399-1845

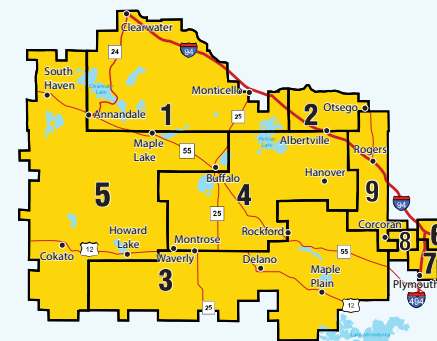
## WH Security monitoring:

Security dispatchers are available 24/7

**Call:** (763) 477-4275 or (800) 858-7811

**Website:** [whe.org](https://whe.org)

**Email:** [info@whe.org](mailto:info@whe.org)



## Board of Directors:

District 1: Timothy Young, Annandale  
District 2: "Butch" Lindenfelser, Monticello  
District 3: Pat Bakeberg, Waverly  
District 4: John Reynolds, Buffalo  
District 5: Chris Lantto, South Haven  
District 6: Mike Tieva, Maple Grove  
District 7: Audrey Britton, Plymouth  
District 8: Mark Skinner, Maple Grove  
District 9: Erick Heinz, Corcoran

**WH President and CEO:** Tim Sullivan

**WH CFO:** Susan Sorensen

**WH Holding COO:** Wendy Youngren

*This cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

## Notice of upcoming member survey

WH will be conducting its biannual American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey in mid-December in partnership with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). You may be contacted via email to take part in this survey. We value your opinions, and always want to exceed your expectations!

**YOUR  
OPINION  
MATTERS**

6800 Electric Drive  
Rockford, MN 55373

# Hotline Update

OCTOBER NEWS FOR WRIGHT-HENNEPIN MEMBERS

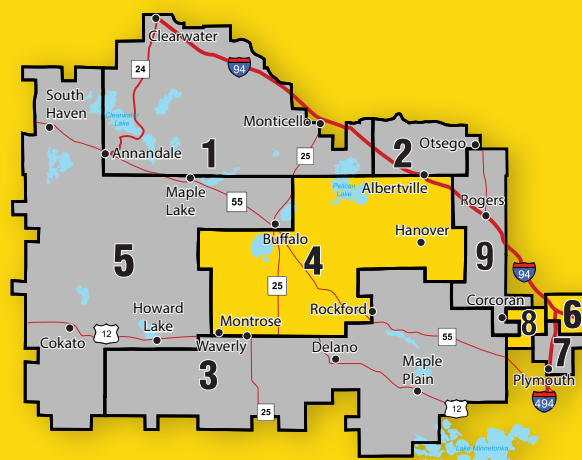
## Members may now file for Board seats

WH members can now submit nominations to vie for a seat on the cooperative's Board of Directors in Districts 4, 6, and 8. Elections will take place at WH's 2025 Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 24. Your board district (BD) number is shown on the second line of the mailing address, just above your name. Members in these districts who would like to run in the election need to file a director nominee application form.

For more information or to apply, visit [bit.ly/WH-Director-Election](https://bit.ly/WH-Director-Election). Applications must be completed, signed, and submitted by March 5, 2025.

MAIL IN THE FORM ALONG WITH A RESUME TO:

**Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association**  
**Attn: Board Chair Erick Heinz**  
**PO Box 330**  
**Rockford, MN 55373**



## Scholarship applications are now open!

WH sponsors five different scholarships:

### WRIGHT-HENNEPIN'S LOCAL SCHOOLS SCHOLARSHIP

WH sponsors one scholarship at different high schools in our service territory. These scholarships are made possible from unclaimed capital credit refunds and thanks to donations from its diversified businesses under WH Holding Company. As a result of this arrangement, the investment in the program doesn't affect members' electric rates.

### AT-LARGE SCHOLARSHIP

For students who attend online schools or private schools that neighbor WH's electric service territory.

### EDWARD R. SLEBISKA MEMORIAL LINE WORKER SCHOLARSHIP

Three scholarships are awarded annually to those in WH's service territory who want to pursue a career as an electric line worker.

### NEW!

### WH SECURITY TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS SCHOLARSHIP

WH Security plans to sponsor one scholarship to someone furthering their education in fields relevant to technology systems work.

### BASIN ELECTRIC SCHOLARSHIP

Basin awards scholarships annually to its distribution cooperatives' members, and descendants of employees who work at those cooperatives.

### HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS: APPLY NOW!

## Youth Tour

The annual Washington, D.C. Youth Tour is a once-in-a-lifetime, all-expenses-paid leadership opportunity available exclusively to high school juniors whose parents or guardians are WH members.

More than 1,800 high school students from around the country spend the week visiting historical sites, making new friends, and meeting with Minnesota's political representatives. Attendees learn firsthand about our government, and how their local electric cooperative is affected by today's national political decisions. The 2025 Youth Tour will be held in June.



GET DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION  
[bit.ly/WH-scholarships](https://bit.ly/WH-scholarships)



GET DETAILS  
AND THE APPLICATION  
[bit.ly/WH-Youth-Tour](https://bit.ly/WH-Youth-Tour)

Parent or guardian must be a WH member to apply for the scholarships or the Youth Tour.