

# POWER LINE

November 2020



**Redwood Electric Cooperative**

60 Pine Street • Clements, Minnesota 56224



Redwood Electric's directors, managers and employees would like to wish you a Happy Thanksgiving!

**Our office will be CLOSED on  
Thursday, November 26th and Friday, November 27th  
to spend time with our family and friends.**





Helping People. Changing Lives.

## Struggling to pay your monthly housing bills?

.....  
**Call a United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) office near you:**  
.....

**Willmar: 320.235.0850**

**Marshall: 507.537.1416**

**Redwood Falls: 507.637.2187**

United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) has been awarded money to help families who are struggling to meet their housing related payments through the MN COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program (CHAP). An on-line application is available at [www.housinghelpmn.org](http://www.housinghelpmn.org). If families in UCAP's service area use the on-line application, please scroll to Southwest Minnesota and click on the United Community Action Partnership line. If needed, UCAP staff can help families walk through the process.

In addition to contacting a UCAP office and applying for the MN COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program (CHAP), you **MUST** contact **Redwood Electric at 507-692-2214 or email [sgroebner@redwoodelectric.com](mailto:sgroebner@redwoodelectric.com)**



### ***Military Personnel Payment Arrangements***

Minnesota law provides that a public utility not disconnect the utility service of a residential member for nonpayment, that has been issued orders into active military duty, for deployment or for a permanent change in duty station, provided that they enter into an agreement with the utility to make payments towards their bill. Inability to pay forms are available from the co-op. Please call our office with any questions or to set up an arrangement.



# Cold Weather Rule

Outlines Process to Avoid Winter

**\*\*\*THE MEMBER MUST CONTACT OUR OFFICE BEFORE  
THE DISCONNECT DATE IF THEY RECEIVE A DISCONNECT  
NOTICE ON THEIR BILL\*\*\***

## Residential Member Notice

An electric cooperative must not disconnect residential service between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit **when the following conditions are met:**

- The member has declared an inability to pay on forms provided by the utility. A member receiving energy assistance has demonstrated this inability. The member **MUST** provide the coop with the approval letter or confirmation from the energy assistance agency;
- The member's household income is less than 50 percent of the state median income;
- Verification of income may be conducted by the local energy assistance provider or the coop, unless the member is automatically eligible for protection against disconnection as a recipient of any form of public assistance, including energy assistance that uses income eligibility in an amount at or below the income eligibility as mentioned above;
- A member whose account is current for the billing period immediately prior to October 15 or who, at any time, enters into a payment arrangement that considers the financial resources of the household and is reasonably current with payments under the arrangement. **Payment arrangements must be honored to avoid disconnection of utility services and for any future payments to be accepted during the cold weather season and;**
- The member receives referrals to energy assistance programs, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce the member's energy bills.
- It is the members responsibility to contact our office to provide the coop with all required information and if any current payment arrangements need to be changed **prior to the scheduled disconnect date or the payment arrangement date. Payment Arrangements are considered BROKEN if our office is contacted after the arrangement date and NO future arrangements will be made!!!!This is very IMPORTANT!!!**

## Members Facing Disconnection

Before disconnecting service to a residential member between **Oct. 15 and April 15**, the following information must be provided to the member:

- A notice of the proposed disconnection;
- A statement that explains the member's rights and responsibilities;
- A list of local energy assistance providers;
- Forms on which to declare an inability to pay; and
- A statement explaining available timely-payment plans and other options to secure continued utility service.

## Restrictions For Disconnection

If a member must be involuntarily disconnected between October 15 and April 15 for failure to comply with residential disconnection provisions, it must not occur on a Friday or the day before a holiday. Plus, the disconnection must not occur until 20 days after the notice required, as previously listed, was mailed to the member or 15 days after the notice was personally delivered to the member. Redwood Electric has the **"DISCONNECT NOTICE" IN RED ON THE MEMBERS MONTHLY BILL WITH THE DUE DATE BEING THE 6TH OF EVERY MONTH AND THE AMOUNT DUE IS THE ENTIRE BALANCE.** If the member does not respond to the disconnect notice prior to the due date of the 6th of each month, the coop will continue with the disconnect process. The 20 days starts the day the bill with the DISCONNECT NOTICE on it was mailed. If you have any questions about this, please contact our office. **Then the member receives a "courtesy friendly reminder (COURTESY FRIENDLY REMINDER NOTICE IS NOT THE DISCONNECT NOTICE!!!).**

If a member does not respond to the courtesy friendly reminder that is either emailed, sent via text message (these options are only available if the member has their electric account registered with SmartHub) or is left at the location (\$75 collection fee is charged when the lineman delivers a courtesy friendly reminder notice), the member must not be disconnected until the coop investigates whether the residential unit is actually occupied. If the unit is found to be occupied, the coop must inform the member of the provisions of this section. If the unit is unoccupied, the coop must give seven days written notice to the local energy assistance provider before making a disconnection. If, prior to disconnection, a member appeals a notice of involuntary disconnection as provided by the coop's established appeal procedure, the utility must not disconnect until the appeal is resolved.

## Active Duty Military Shut-Off Protection

When a household member has been ordered into active duty, for deployment or for a change of duty station, some members may find it hard to pay their utility bills. Minnesota law protects these military personnel from shut off if they cannot pay their bills in full. For more information and to apply for a payment arrangement, please contact Redwood Electric office.

**Contact your local United Community Action office to apply for Energy Assistance or for MN COVID-19 Housing Assistance. If you apply for assistance and have a red disconnect notice on your bill, you will need to contact our office immediately to notify us.**

## Problems Paying Your Electric Bill?

*Energy Assistance May Be Available*

### United Community Action

Marshall Office: 507-537-1416  
Redwood Falls Office: 507-637-2187  
Willmar Office: 320-235-0850

### The Salvation Army HeatShare

320-235-2033  
507-537-1416

### Veterans Services (MAC-V)

Redwood County: 507-637-4034  
Lyon County: 507-537-6729  
Brown County: 507-233-6636

### Salvation Army

Redwood Falls: 507-637-2187

### Redwood County Human Services

507-637-4041  
Toll Free: 888-837-6713

### MN COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program (CHAP)

[www.housinghelpmn.org](http://www.housinghelpmn.org)

### The ARC Minnesota Housing Access Program-Southwest Region

Cheryl Hutchens: 507-345-4223  
<https://www.arcminnesota.org/ways-we-can-help/housing-access-services/>

"The Southwest Region provides programs and services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, Waseca, Watonwan, and Yellow Medicine counties."



## Office Hours & Contact Information

Monday-Friday 7:00 AM-3:30 PM

Phone: 888-251-5100 or 507-692-2214

Email address: [office@redwoodelectric.com](mailto:office@redwoodelectric.com)

Web: [www.redwoodelectric.com](http://www.redwoodelectric.com)

SmartHub: [redwoodelectric.smarthub.coop](http://redwoodelectric.smarthub.coop)

Pay By Phone: 844-846-2696

## OUTAGES

(888) 251-5100  
24 HOURS A DAY

## \*CALL BEFORE YOU DIG\*

Gopher State One

Call (800) 252-1166

## General Manager

Ronald Horman

## Board of Directors

Dick Nelson

Michael Baune

Dan Tauer

Dean Fultz

Jill Weber VanDerWal

Emily Evans

George W. Turbes



## STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

*Redwood Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.* If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to:

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).