

# MWEC

Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**WILLISTON**  
577-3765

**STANLEY**  
628-2242

**NEW TOWN**  
627-3550

## We are your source for power and information

You pay your utility bill every month with Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative and more than likely you think to yourself, “That’s done.” But, the truth is we’re more than just a utility provider that you pay each month for electricity.

Everyone at Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC) is committed to building even stronger connections with you and the local communities we serve. One of the ways we are delivering on this goal is by providing you with information, resources and services that are as reliable and useful as the electricity we supply. We want you to view MWEC as your trusted energy partner and your first stop whenever you have a question about energy efficiency, renewables or other information about your co-op.

Recently, MWEC has looked at ways to make our services more efficient and valuable. Here are just a few of the ways we are sharing our energy expertise with you and leveraging the cooperative advantage to benefit every member.

- We help you keep energy use in check by providing energy-efficiency tips. No one makes

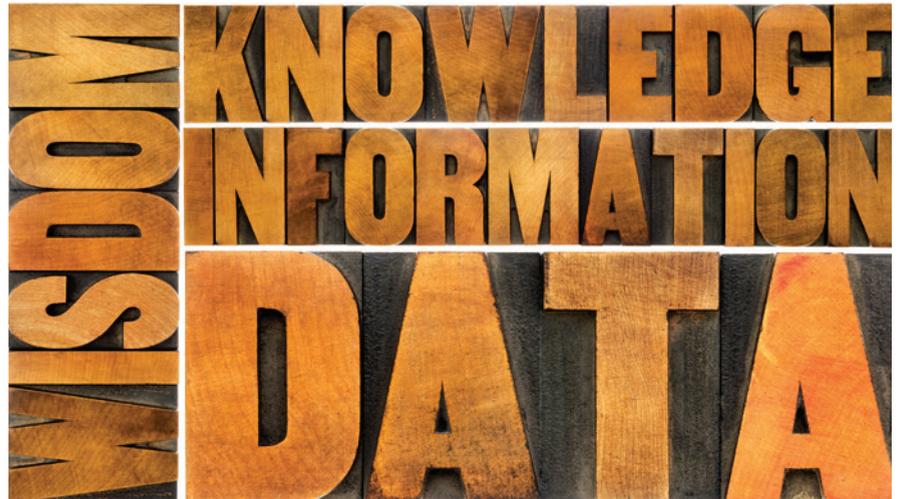
electrical safety more of a priority than MWEC, and we take this commitment a step further by providing electrical safety tools and tips to help keep you and your family safe in and around your home.

- When it comes to renewable energy, we are here to answer your questions about options in our region. You can trust MWEC to provide you with the latest renewable energy.

In addition to supplying you with low-cost electricity and reliable answers, MWEC also provides you with even more ways to save money.

Membership in MWEC is a powerful thing. It means we are owned by you, our members. It means you have an energy partner you can trust to look out for your community’s best interests, not its own bottom line.

When you have energy-related questions or needs, or questions about your membership, we are ready to work with you. At the end of the day, that’s the cooperative advantage that allows us to be your community’s trusted partner, provide you with the electricity you need to power your daily life, and to be your source for power and information. ■



## In this issue:

- **Preparing for director elections**
- **Energy-saving tips**
- **Avoid fallen power lines**
- **Meeting minutes ... and more!**

# Preparing for *director elections*

Being an electric cooperative member offers a unique opportunity to be a part of the decision-making process in the business. Because Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC) is a cooperative, it is owned by its members. That means members are responsible for electing other members to take the leadership positions on the board of directors to help shape business decisions for the cooperative.

Each year, MWEC holds an annual meeting and encourages members to attend and vote for the directors of their choice. A nomination process must occur before the annual meeting. Members interested in being a board candidate should review the many responsibilities required of the position.

The board of directors is a legal body which is held accountable for the actions of the cooperative by both the Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative members and the government. Directors are expected to attend special and regular board meetings, committee meetings and the annual meeting. Directors should also plan to attend one National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) meeting or directors conference every year. Directors also are expected to complete their NRECA Credentialed Directors Certificate (educational director classes), during their first two terms of office. Directors receive

a fee for meeting attendance and are reimbursed for all reasonable expenses for attending cooperative business meetings.

It is possible for directors to spend more than 25 days each year for MWEC business. MWEC directors are expected to read and be familiar with information and financial reports from the cooperative, or other national and state associations. Directors are elected to represent a specific district but are responsible for decisions affecting the entire membership. Directors should possess the interpersonal skills to work in harmony with the whole board and have the self-confidence and communication skills to express their opinion and views with other directors.

Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative directors are members of the cooperative and pay monthly electric bills like other MWEC members. They do not receive discounted power, and their bills are not subsidized. The directors of MWEC are equally as interested as other members in system reliability and the most reasonable operation of the cooperative. The directors of MWEC are typically elected for their business sense and level of respect within the community.

Director elections are open to all members. A director term is for three years. The following districts will be up for election at the 2019 MWEC annual meeting.

- **West District 1C:** This precinct is comprised of the following townships in Williams County: Gernora, Barr Butte, Scorio, Blue Ridge, Rock Island, Climax, Good Luck, Orthell, Winner, Ellisville, Strandahl, Bonetraill, Blacktail, Athena and Duburn.
- **Central District 2C:** This precinct is comprised of the following townships in Mountrail County: Powers, Lostwood, Cottonwood, James Hill, Manitou, Ross, Idaho, Debing, Alger, Purcell, Rat Lake, Brook Bank, Sikes, Knife River and Crane Creek.
- **East District 3C:** This precinct is comprised of the following townships in Mountrail County: Wayzetta, Shell, Spring Coulee, Osborn, Van Hook, Parshall, Model, Plaza, Big Bend, Howie, Liberty, Fertile, Banner, Mountrail, Fort Berthold Indian Reservation and T152-R93W.

The MWEC bylaws outline the specific nomination and election process, along with the specific qualifications required to be an MWEC director. Nomination material is available at all MWEC offices. Nomination material will be accepted starting March 8, 2019, and the deadline to submit the material is May 6, 2019. ■

# Energy-saving tips for winter

For some people, winter is a wonderful season, filled with activities that can only happen when the temperature drops. For others, it is a season that causes a great deal of discomfort, one that can only be endured with the use of modern heating technology and plenty of hot toddies. But no matter how you happen to view the coldest season, one thing is certain – your energy bill is going to climb quite a bit as the weather cools.

Fortunately, there are several things you can do to limit the damage to your wallet and to increase your overall comfort in the process. Here are some effective energy-saving tips for winter that might make the cold just a little more bearable. Use these winter energy-savings tips to not only bring down your bills, but to make your home a safer and more enjoyable place to live.

**Get a home energy audit** – This is one of the easiest ways to find out how well your home saves energy while keeping you comfortable. A professional energy audit will examine all aspects of your home to see how efficient its energy usage is using a variety of tools and techniques. The auditor will even examine your family's energy usage and habits to determine how you can improve your energy usage. Another fantastic place to get energy-saving tips for winter is the U.S. Department of Energy website, at [www.Energy.Gov](http://www.Energy.Gov).

**Open the curtains during the day** – The windows that allow the most sunshine in should be left uncovered during the daytime hours. This will allow the sun's energy to naturally warm your home and lower your need for your heating unit to kick in



as often as it normally would. Just make sure to close the curtains after the sun goes down to help insulate the windows.

**Insulate your windows** – You can increase the insulating properties of your windows in several ways. The first and most obvious is to install heavier insulating drapes that fit tightly to the window opening. You can also install a clear plastic film to create a tight seal to the window frame, creating a layer of air that will help with insulation. You can attach the film directly to the wall or frame, or you can create a wooden insert covered in plastic that fits tightly to the window frame. This removable frame makes it easy to take off the plastic when you need to and can be used again and again.

**Seal leaks** – There are quite a few areas where warm air may escape from your home. There is no point in heating the outside air, so take some time and explore all the places where you can seal the home. The most obvious places are windows

and doors. Apply weather-stripping or caulking around your windows and doors. You should also look for any place where pipes or cables enter your home. Often these need to be sealed as well. Therefore, getting an energy audit is a good idea.

**Lower the thermostat** – With a little experimentation, you should be able to find the lowest thermostat setting that allows you and your family to remain comfortable. If you wear warmer clothing inside, you can keep the thermostat lower. You can also lower the thermostat by 5 to 10 degrees at night while you are sleeping or when you are out of your house for the day. Some heating specialists, however, recommend not dropping the temperature too low, because everything in our homes absorbs heat, including the furniture, accessories and walls to keep the home warm.

**Clean and maintain your heating system** – Depending on what type of heating system you use, it should be possible to clean it yearly and replace



the air filter to improve efficiency. You should also consider calling an HVAC specialist to do an annual checkup on your heating system. A faulty or dirty system can cost you quite a bit of money during the colder winter months. If you have an oil heating system, cleaning and maintenance become a must as they can get very dirty. You can also take years off the life of your system if it

is not maintained on a yearly basis. A gas heating system should have a tuneup every couple of years.

### **Take a close look at your fireplace**

– While traditional fireplaces are fun to use and provide great atmosphere, they need to be maintained properly and fitted with modern additions to provide efficient heat for your home. Make sure the chimney and fireplace

are clean and sealed. Keep the flue closed when you are not using the fireplace. And if you want the fireplace to heat your home, you will need to install glass fireplace doors and an exchange system to push warm air into the home and pull cold air into the fireplace. Many people do not realize that a conventional brick fireplace may warm the room you are in, but it will suck the heat out of the rest of your home, making it feel colder in other areas.

**Have your hot water heater maintained** – Depending on where you live, your water may have certain minerals in it that can build up and lower the efficiency of your hot water heater over time. If it has been a few years since a specialist has looked at it, you may want to call one. Heating water for the home uses a large portion of the energy on your utility bill, up to 25 percent, in some cases. You can also lower the temperature setting of your water heater to around 120 degrees if you want to save some money. It will still put out hot water, but not unbearably hot. Most home inspectors will recommend this as a proper temperature as well if you have young kids. Anything hotter than 120 degrees increases the risk of scalding.

**Wrap the hot water heater** – Wrapping the water heater with insulation can also be a big energy saver especially during the winter. You can buy a water heater insulator kit. These blankets are inexpensive and can save a decent amount of money. The payback on this item will only be one to two years, given the savings on your electrical bill.

**Consider additional insulation** – While your home may be insulated to a certain extent, you may be able to apply additional insulation in the attic, basement and external walls to increase the heat retention in

your home. You may want to use a professional to install the insulation, although you can certainly do it yourself if you are so inclined. Modern insulation is easy to install and an extra layer or two may save you a lot of money in heating bills over the life of the home.

### **Avoid blocking heating vents**

– Furniture and toys have a way of drifting over vents through the course of the warmer months. Do a scan of your home to make sure all the vents are unblocked and free to push warm air into the home. If you use a heat pump, you should go outside and make sure the input is free from debris and grass.

### **Clean the refrigerator coils**

– Once a year, vacuuming the refrigerator coils is a must. If you have a pet, it is even more important to do so, as hair, dirt and debris can get caught in the coils, creating a very inefficient appliance. These things impede air flow and make heat transfer less efficient.

**Install a programmable thermostat** – If your house still has an old thermostat that you must manually adjust you could be losing money on your heating bill. A programmable thermostat allows you to set what temperature you want during all hours. So, you can tell the system to lower by 10 degrees at bedtime every night or to begin heating the house a half hour before you get home from work. These are not expensive and can be a really easy way to save a little money in heating costs. Again, remember the temptation to saving energy in the winter could cause you to roll back your thermostat too much during times where you are not around. There is a fine line between dropping the temperature some and lowering it too much.

**Consider a Wi-Fi thermostat control** – Even better than a basic programmable thermostat, this new option allows you to control your thermostat from your smartphone. If you forget to lower the temperature before you leave for work, you can do it from your phone. You can also respond to sudden weather changes while you are out of the house. Some of these systems can even be used to control other things in the house, like lights and garage door openers. This is a great way to gain complete control over your home's systems remotely and save energy in the process.

**Purchase Energy Star products** – If you find that replacing appliances will happen sooner rather than later, consider Energy Star products. They are much more efficient and designed specifically to save energy. For example, comparing a regular fridge to an Energy Star fridge could offers as much as a 20 percent savings in energy charges.

**Unplug appliances not in use** – If you are energy-conscious and tight

on money, having a spare fridge that's nearly empty is a definite way of bringing your winter energy bill down. A second refrigerator takes quite a bit of energy to run. You will be able to lop off quite a bit just by unplugging this one appliance.

If you are going to be selling your home, there is no question that buyers are conscious regarding the energy consumption of your home. In fact, one of the top questions realtors get is, "What are the energy bills for the home I am looking at?" Buyers consistently ask for records of prior heating and electricity bills.

They do this to gauge the efficiency of the home and can budget for their own financial purposes. Buyers have several expenses when purchasing a home. Many buyers will look for homes that are not only pleasing to the eye but energy-efficient as well.

First-time buyers will especially scrutinize these bills as many of them are on a tight budget. So, while all these energy savings tips will help you in the short run, they can reap additional benefits when it comes time to sell! ■



# Avoid touching or approaching fallen power lines

Downed power lines are dangerous. Never touch them. For safety's sake, always assume that a fallen power line is energized, and follow these guidelines:

- Avoid touching the downed line with your hand or an object, such as a stick, broom or pole.
- Avoid touching anything, such as a car, object or equipment, or anyone who is in contact with a fallen power line.
- Keep children and pets away from fallen electric lines.
- Avoid driving over a fallen power line.
- Call 9-1-1 immediately to report a fallen power line.

## Stay safe if a fallen power line touches your car

If your vehicle comes into contact with a downed power line, follow these safety rules:

- Stay inside your car. The ground around your car may be energized.
- Sound the horn, roll down your window and call for help.
- Warn others to stay away. Anyone who touches the equipment or ground around your car can be injured.
- Use your cellphone to call 9-1-1.
- Wait until the fire department, police or MWEC workers tell you it's safe to get out of your car before exiting the vehicle.

## If your car is in contact with a fallen power line and a fire starts, follow these guidelines when exiting your vehicle:

- Remove loose items of clothing.
- Keep your hands at your sides and jump clear of the vehicle, so you are not touching the car when your feet hit the ground.
- Keep both feet close together and shuffle away from the vehicle without picking up your feet.

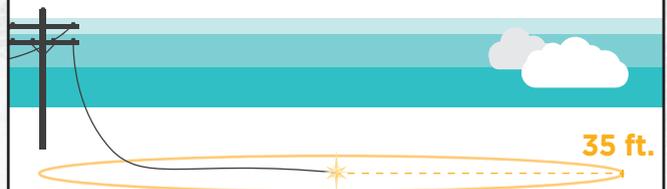
## Follow these safety tips when using balloons and toys around power lines:

- Ensure that helium-filled metallic balloons are tied to weights heavy enough to prevent them from floating into power lines.
- Use metallic balloons, kites and remote-control toys away from overhead electric lines to avoid the potential for power outages, fires and serious injuries.

- Contact MWEC immediately at 1-800-279-2667 if a balloon or toy is caught in a power line. Never attempt to retrieve an object that is on or near a power line. ■

## Downed and Dangerous

If you see a downed power line, always assume it is energized and dangerous. Avoid going near it or anything in contact with the power line.



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 ft.** away - so keep your distance.



Never drive over a downed line or through water that is touching the line.



If you see a downed line, notify the local authorities immediately.



Never try to move a downed power line, even if you think the line is deenergized or if you're using a non-conductive item - this will not prevent injury or death!

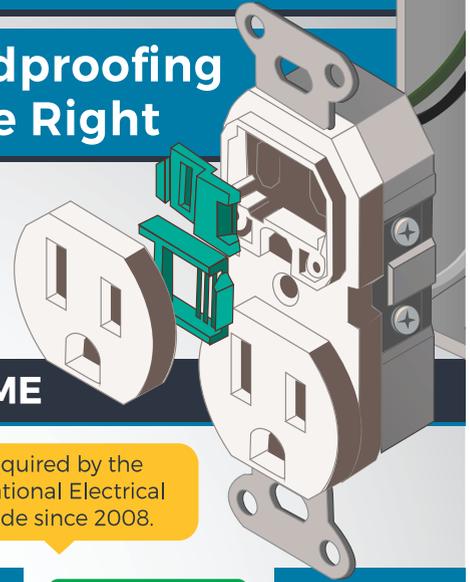
Source: ESFI.org

# TAMPER-RESISTANT RECEPTACLES

## Childproofing Done Right



A study by Temple University found that **100%** of all 2-4 year olds were able to remove one type of plastic outlet cap **within 10 seconds**. Properly childproof your outlets by installing **Tamper-Resistant Receptacles**.



### HOW TO PROPERLY CHILDPROOF YOUR HOME

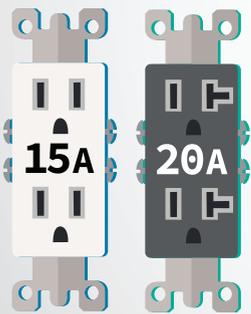
⚡ Tamper-Resistant Receptacles offer a permanent solution to outlet covers.

⚡ Built-in shutters prevent foreign objects from being inserted into the outlet.

⚡ Required by the National Electrical Code since 2008.

#### ► WHERE TO INSTALL

All **15A - 20A, 125v** and **150v** outlets in the following areas must be tamper resistant:



#### ► OTHER WAYS TO KEEP TODDLERS SAFE



Children are continually exploring the world around them. So eliminating risks around your home is important to keep children safe. Installing tamper-resistant receptacles throughout the home is the first step. Here are some other steps to keeping your toddler safe:

- Conceal cords. Keep wires as bundled and hidden as possible.
- Hide surge protectors, and utilize power strip safety covers.
- Unplug and store electrical devices when not in use. This is particularly important with hair dryers, curlers and electric razors in the bathroom. Store them in a cabinet away from water with a safety lock when they are not in use.
- In the kitchen, bathroom and laundry areas, install ground-fault safety interruptors, which lessen the likelihood of electrical injury if an appliance falls into the sink.



These safety tips brought to you by Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative. **Because we care.**

Unofficial minutes  
of regular board meeting  
**Dec. 20, 2018**

**Directors present:** Lahtinen, Lynne, Johnson, Hartsoch, Sorenson, Grant, Jorgenson, Ludwig and Lalim.

**Directors absent:** None.

**Others present:** Manager Haugen, in-house counsel Johnson Ellis, attorney Foust and staff members.

The meeting was held at the Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC) office building and called to order at 9:30 a.m. Director Grant noted an addition to the meeting reports of the agenda and it was approved as amended. Minutes of the regular board meeting from Nov. 28, 2018, were accepted as presented.

**SAFETY MINUTE:** Exits were identified, the evacuation plan was discussed and the first-aid kit was located. Alex Vournas volunteered to call 911 in case of an emergency.

**2019 LOAD FORECAST:** Manager Haugen updated the board on the 2019 load forecast, discussing that the MWEC number for the Basin Electric Power Cooperative study were raised to more accurately forecast the upcoming year.

**2019 FINANCIAL FORECAST AND BUDGET:** Steve Kettler, Sarah Bullock and Elaine MacDonald presented the updated financial forecast and budget for 2019. Steve Kettler was happy to report the forecast is looking strong going into 2019.

**SAFETY REPORT:** James Neether presented a safety report to the board. There were no vehicular accidents or recordable accidents in November. He reported MWEC employees will participate in an emergency evacuation plan training in January. Michael Felix did a demonstration using electrically charged models to show some dangers of working or playing around electricity. This model and demonstration will be shown to the public throughout the year at places and functions such as area schools, first responders, agriculture conventions, and oil and gas conventions.

**WILLISTON STATE COLLEGE FOUNDATION:** Terry Olson and Hunter Berg with the Williston State College Foundation spoke with the board about the Frontier Hall naming opportunity. The Foundation is fundraising to help reduce the cost of room and board at Williston State College and is asking for donations to support a suite. The board took the request for donation under advisement.

**NRECA INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM:** The board approved a \$1,000 donation to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) International Program, which will go toward volunteer electrification projects in Guatemala and Bolivia for 2019 and to help build programs that will sustain and strengthen the management, governance and safety practices in communities that have already benefitted from the NRECA International Program in past years.

**UPPER MISSOURI BIBLE CAMP:** Alex Vournas, in his capacity as a board member of Upper Missouri Ministries, asked the board to consider donating a used vehicle to the camp. The board approved a donation of a used MWEC vehicle that was set to be traded in to the Upper Missouri Bible Camp.

**ANNE CARLSON CENTER CAMPAIGN:** Tim Eissingner, CEO, and Harvey Huber, campaign chair, came to the board with a presentation on the new construction and expansion of the Anne Carlson Center campus. They are requesting funds to go toward the new construction and expansion and also provide a naming opportunity, depending on the financial gift. They are hoping to obtain gifts from all North Dakota rural electric cooperatives. The board took the request for the donation under advisement.

**DONATION REQUESTS:** The board approved a motion to table the Williston State College Foundation and Anne Carlson Center campaign donation requests until the January 2019 meeting.

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT/WORK ORDER CLOSEOUTS:** The board approved the closeout of the following special equipment/work orders:

Closeout 716.....	\$7,807,825.94
Closeout 717.....	\$42,013,660.84
TOTAL .....	\$49,821,486.78

**CAPITAL CREDIT RETIREMENTS:** The board approved the retirement of the following capital credit accounts for December:

Lillian Soholt estate	
Orrice J. Gohrick estate	
Virgil Chase Sr. estate	
TOTAL .....	\$4,988.89

**MANAGER'S REPORT:** SAFETY – The in-house safety meeting minutes from Dec. 13, 2018, were made available for the board to review.

**RELIABILITY AND OUTAGE REPORT** – The reliability and outage report was made available for review. There were 133 outages in November.

**UMPC EXHIBIT A** – The board approved the authorization of signatures for the Upper Missouri G&T Cooperative, d.b.a. Upper Missouri Power Cooperative Exhibit A, Revision No. 19-01 to the Wholesale Power Contract with Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative.

**CONSTRUCTION UPDATE** – Manager Haugen discussed the two airport bids the cooperative has received. Before final decisions are made, the cooperative is waiting for answers to its questions on the bids.

**GENERATOR UPDATE** – The FCI Constructors Inc. meeting minutes from Dec. 11, 2018, were made available.

**THANK YOU** – A thank you from Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation for the support and sponsorship of the 2018 Medora Musical was presented to the board. A thank you from Roger Cymbaluk for a tour of the new office building was also presented.

**MEETING REPORTS:** NDAREC – Director Grant presented his report for North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC)

meetings he has attended. The Executive Committee minutes from Dec. 7, 2018, were made available and additional reading material from the NDAREC Legislative Advisory Committee was also made available. The NDAREC 2019 annual meeting notice, agenda and 2018 annual meeting minutes were also included in the reading material. The Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) annual meeting invitation was made available, along with the RDFC grant applications.

**UPPER MISSOURI POWER COOPERATIVE** – The general manager update from Dec. 4, 2018, was made available. Director Jorgenson gave a brief report and also had a written report available.

**CFC** – A letter from Jenny Scharmer, director for the Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC), announcing her candidacy for the District 6 election for the CFC board of directors was made available. Director Hartsoch gave a report on the CFC workshop she attended.

**NRECA** – Mark Stallon's candidate statement for the Touchstone Energy® board of directors was made available.

**NATIONAL INFORMATION SOLUTIONS COOPERATIVE** – The 2018 capital credit summary was made available. The cooperative's beginning balance was \$98,318.65, the 2018 allocation was \$14,766.58, with an ending balance as of Dec. 31, 2018, in the amount of \$113,085.23.

**MID-WEST ELECTRIC CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION** – Director Lynne gave a brief report.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. ■

**MOUNTRAIL-WILLIAMS  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

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**DIRECTORS**

Roger Sorenson ..... Chairperson  
Robert Grant ..... Vice-Chairperson  
Cheryl Hartsoch ..... Treasurer  
Blaine Jorgenson ..... Secretary  
Larry Johnson ..... Director  
Aaron Lynne ..... Director  
Garrett Lalim ..... Director  
Luke Lahtinen ..... Director  
Dick Ludwig ..... Director  
Neff, Eiken  
& Neff, PC ..... Project Attorney  
Dale Haugen ..... General Manager

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 