



HONORING A LEGACY OF SERVICE: CELEBRATING THE CAREERS OF GREGG NISTLER AND ROBERT THOMES

McLeod Cooperative Power is proud to recognize the careers of Gregg Nistler and Robert Thomes, whose years of service have helped shape the cooperative and strengthen the communities it serves. As they retire, their contributions reflect the cooperative's commitment to its members.

Gregg Nistler joined McLeod Cooperative Power in March of 2002, bringing prior experience with Seaward Construction and Otter Tail Power Company. He started as a lineman and transitioned into engineering as a staker in 2006.

Over the years, Gregg saw many changes, but the moments that stand out most are the ones that define the cooperative's mission. "The things that you remember the most are the big storm jobs," Gregg said. "When conditions are at their



worst and you are restoring power, the satisfaction comes from watching the lights come back on one by one."

Gregg especially valued building relationships with members and appreciated how the co-op evolved through new technology and infrastructure, including the new headquarters and improved outage detection systems.

Continued on page 4.

THE SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

Electric cooperatives like McLeod Co-op Power are guided by seven principles that put members first:

Voluntary and Open Membership: Membership is open to all who receive service.

Democratic Member Control: Members elect a board to represent their voice.

Members' Economic Participation: Margins are returned to members as capital credits.

Autonomy and Independence: Co-ops are locally governed and independent.

Education, Training, and Information: We keep members informed and employees trained.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives: Co-ops work together to strengthen communities.

Concern for Community: We support local programs and economic development.

These principles guide our daily decisions, from delivering reliable power to investing in our communities. As a member, you are not just a customer, you are an owner whose voice helps shape the future of your cooperative.

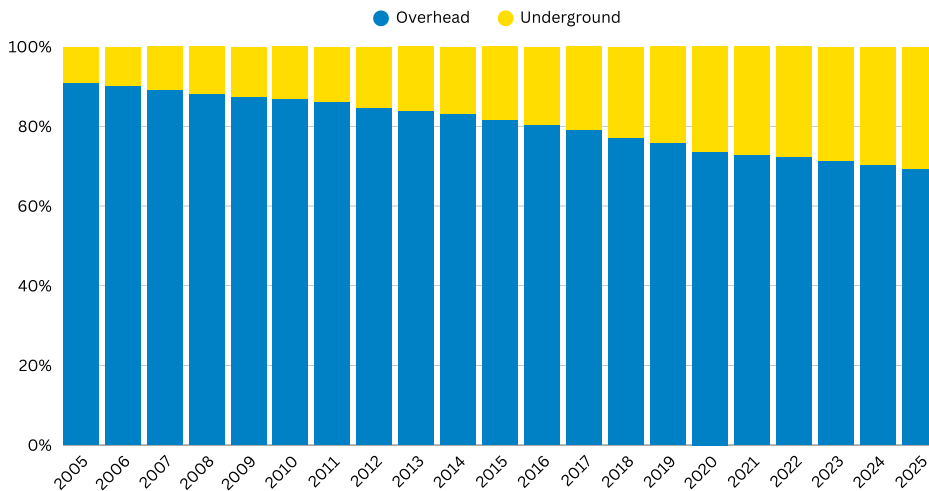
2026 CONSTRUCTION PLAN: BUILDING FOR RELIABILITY



As spring weather arrives, construction season begins at McLeod Co-op Power. Our crews are preparing for another busy year focused on maintaining, upgrading, and strengthening the electric system to serve our members safely and reliably.

In 2026, we will continue our investment in underground line conversions where it makes sense. Planned projects include converting approximately 12 miles of overhead line to underground, including 6.5 miles of single-phase line and 5.5 miles of three-phase line. These projects will replace aging overhead conductor with underground cable in targeted areas, helping reduce exposure to weather and tree-related outages while improving overall system performance. Since 2005, underground line has increased from 9% to 31% of our total system.

OVERHEAD TO UNDERGROUND CONVERSION SINCE 2005



When planning these upgrades, we evaluate a variety of factors, including the age, type, and size of conductor, right of way conditions, tree density, nearby roads and buildings, and how each line connects to the overall distribution system. Taking all of these elements into account ensures we make cost-effective decisions that support long-term reliability and member satisfaction.

Vegetation management is also a key part of our annual work plan. TreeStory will begin work in Lynn, Collins, Boon Lake, and Preston Lake townships, then continue into Penn, New Auburn, Green Isle, Transit, Dryden, and Arlington starting in May, pending weather. Proactive tree trimming helps prevent outages and keeps crews and the public safe.

Together, these construction and maintenance efforts support a stronger, more resilient system and help ensure dependable service for our members now and into the future.



MOVE OVER TO KEEP UTILITY WORKERS SAFE

Electric utility employees at McLeod Co-op Power work on overhead and underground lines, maintain substations, operate heavy equipment, and check meters daily. Electricity is extremely dangerous and one of the biggest hazards they face, but traffic is another major risk.

Crews often work along roads, using flashing lights and cones to create a work zone. It is important to move over when you see these signals to help keep workers safe. Failing to do so puts utility crews and other responders at risk.

Minnesota's Ted Foss Move Over Law requires drivers to move one full lane away from stopped vehicles with flashing lights. This law applies not only to emergency responders, but also to utility, maintenance, and construction vehicles.

If you cannot move over, slow down until you have safely passed. Please drive carefully and move over so everyone can return home safely.

CEO MESSAGE

Over the past couple of days, I, along with several of our board members and colleagues from Minnesota's electric cooperative family, traveled to St. Paul to meet with our legislators. These conversations are an important part of advocating for you, our members. Among the topics we discussed were the need for thoughtful net metering reform and the potential lifting of Minnesota's nuclear moratorium.

In these conversations, and in many others I have with members, policymakers, and even customers of investor-owned utilities like Xcel Energy, I often find myself explaining the differences between our business models.

Investor-owned utilities are exactly what the name implies. They are companies owned by shareholders, many of whom do not live in the communities they serve. Their decision-making is driven by the need to deliver returns to those investors. Municipal utilities, on the other hand, are owned by the citizens of the cities they serve and are not structured around generating profits.

Electric cooperatives operate differently from both. We are not driven to maximize margins. When we generate margins above what is needed to operate the system safely and reliably, those dollars are returned to members as capital credits.

That raises the question of how we determine what is enough and what is excess. The answer lies in our governance model.

Unlike investor-owned utilities, we are not regulated by the Public Utilities Commission. Instead, we are governed locally by a board of directors made up of members, your friends and neighbors, who are elected by you.

At McLeod Cooperative Power, our bylaws require that when a director's term expires, the seat is contested. To support this process, a Nominating Committee is formed, made up of members from the district where the election will take place. This committee seeks out qualified candidates by making calls, sending emails, and having conversations. They also



CEO RON MEIER

evaluate all interested candidates, including incumbents, before selecting two individuals to appear on the ballot.

Members can also run by petition. By securing at least 20 member signatures and submitting the petition at least 45 days prior to the Annual Meeting, a qualified member can be placed on the ballot.

This local, member-driven governance model is one of the defining strengths of the cooperative. Decisions are made by people who live here, work here, and are directly impacted by those decisions.

As we look ahead to our next election cycle, the Nominating Committee has begun its work. If you have ever considered serving on the board or know someone who would be a strong candidate, I encourage you to reach out and engage in the process. Our cooperative is strongest when members take an active role in its leadership.

Cooperatively

RIPPL



**LIKE US ON
FACEBOOK**

www.facebook.com/McLeodCoop

Follow the McLeod Co-op Power Facebook page for outage updates, energy tips, community news, and member programs that keep you informed and connected.

MARCH 2026 BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of McLeod Cooperative Power Association was held on March 24th, 2026, at MCPA's headquarters in Glencoe. Eight of the board members, CEO Ron Meier, and department managers participated in the meeting.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- The outage report for the month of February was reviewed with a total of 24 outages, affecting 25 consumers.
- Operations Manager Brady gave his monthly report. Line crews are completing pole changes that were rejected during the inspection process.
- Emerson Brady gave a presentation on the Line Extension Policy.
- A motion carried approving the 2026 Annual Meeting Notice for July 14 at the Crow River Winery.
- It was reported that the Operation Round-Up meeting was held on March 9. The Trust received 36 completed applications, and 29 of those applications received funds.
- A motion carried approving Resolution 2026-03-01 Allocation of 2026 Margins.
- Manager of Finance Jakel reviewed the February financials.
- CEO Meier gave his monthly report.
- Director Hlavka gave the Great River Energy report.

RETIREMENTS CONTINUED...

While proud of his career, it is the people he worked with that he will miss most. "They really are a good group," he said.

In retirement, Gregg plans to travel and spend more time with family and grandchildren. His advice to others is simple: "Time goes by fast. Enjoy it."

Robert Thomes began his career with McLeod Cooperative Power on February 1, 1994, during the cooperative's DIRECTV era. With prior interest in satellite services, he joined as a Member Service Representative and later transitioned into the electric side of the business, becoming Assistant Member Service Manager.

One of Robert's proudest accomplishments was helping grow the DIRECTV business to serve more customers than the electric side at one point. He also played a role in the construction of MCPA's new headquarters during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout his 32 years, Robert remained focused on members. "The member is the most important person in our cooperative," he said. "They are not just an account number."

He also valued the strong relationships with coworkers, describing them as a



"family away from home." Over time, he witnessed major changes, including advancements in equipment and the shift from paper to digital processes.

In retirement, Robert looks forward to spending time with his wife, children, and nine grandchildren, traveling to complete his list of Major League Baseball parks, announcing games for the Arlington A's, and continuing his radio show, Sibley Talk on KGLB.

"Thank you to the MCPA members and employees for having me for the last 32 years," Robert said.

Together, Gregg Nistler and Robert Thomes leave behind a legacy of dedication and service that will continue to benefit McLeod Cooperative Power and its members for years to come.



2026 ANNUAL MEETING

The McLeod Co-op Power Annual Meeting will take place on Tuesday, July 14, 2026.

CAPTIAL CREDIT ALLOCATION NOTICE

The amount of capital credits allocated to each member for 2025 is shown on the electric bill being mailed in mid-April. It is based on margins allocated. McLeod Co-op Power allocations may be refunded to the member at some time in the future when capital credits for 2025 are retired. The amount shown is not available to be deducted from the bill at this time. It is merely a notice of allocation.

NO POWER? NO WORRIES

When a power outage occurs, a Briggs & Stratton standby generator is designed for what matters most, your total peace of mind.

Protect your home and family from the expense and inconvenience caused by power outages.

Call (800) 494-6272 for more info!



2026 REBATES

MAKE THE UPGRADE. GET REWARDED.

From heating and cooling to water heaters and more, rebates from McLeod Co-op Power help you save upfront and long-term.

Start your project with savings in mind.
www.mcleodcoop.com/products/rebates



LOWER YOUR PEAK. LOWER YOUR BILL. SMART ENERGY HABITS THAT PAY OFF

Your electric bill now includes a Time of Day Demand charge. This charge is based on the highest amount of electricity you use at one time during On Peak Hours, 5 PM to 9 PM, Monday through Friday (excluding major holidays).

It is not about how much total energy you use, but how much you use at once. Even one evening of high usage can set your demand for the entire month. The good news is that energy rates have decreased, and with a few simple changes, you can manage your demand and save.

SIMPLE WAYS TO LOWER YOUR DEMAND



SHIFT HIGH-USE ACTIVITIES

Avoid running multiple large appliances and equipment at the same time during peak hours. When possible, run them earlier in the day, later in the evening, or on weekends. Charge electric vehicles overnight or outside peak hours.



STAGGER YOUR USAGE

Instead of running appliances all at once, spread out your use of dryers, ovens, dishwashers, and other high-energy equipment. For example, if you need to run the dishwasher after dinner and then start laundry later in the evening. This helps prevent a spike in demand.



USE SMART CONTROLS AND TIMERS

Program thermostats to pre-heat or pre-cool your home before peak hours. Use timers or delay settings to run water heaters, EV chargers, and appliances until after 9 PM.



ENROLL IN LOAD MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Programs like Off-Peak Water Heating, Dual Fuel Heating, Storage Heating, and EV Charging automatically shift usage to off-peak times. These options can lower demand and may qualify for rebates or special rates.



WATCH HEATING AND COOLING USE

Heating and cooling systems are often the biggest contributors to peak demand. Adjust your thermostat a few degrees during peak hours or avoid sudden large changes.



LIMIT SIMULTANEOUS USE IN THE KITCHEN

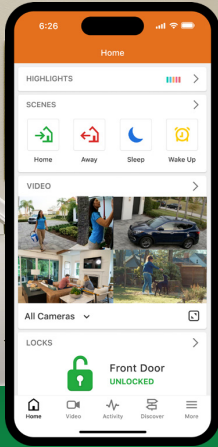
Cooking appliances can draw significant power. Try not to use the oven, stovetop, microwave, and other appliances all at once during peak hours. Again, the idea is to spread out your electrical use.



BE AWARE OF YOUR PEAK

Your demand is set by your highest usage during peak hours each month. Paying attention to when you use electricity can make a noticeable difference. Our SmartHub account management software/app can be a great tool to stay informed of your energy usage.

Smarter Security at Your Fingertips



Know what's happening at your property the moment it happens. Get real-time alerts and remote system control with Heartland's smart security solutions.

Get a **FREE** security analysis today!

888.264.6380
heartlandss.com



Control your comfort from anywhere.
Or let the thermostat do it for you.

Save up to \$65 today.
Keep saving year-round.



Offer available for a limited time.

Additional terms apply. See website for details.

ENERGY WISE  MN

SHOP NOW AT ENERGYWISEMNSTORE.COM



CELEBRATE

the People Behind Your Power.

LINWORKER APPRECIATION DAY

April 13, 2026

Our lineworkers are on call 24/7, 365 days a year. They give their all to keep your power on. Say thank you with us on Lineworker Appreciation Day, April 13.



CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG

As spring projects begin, make safety your first step. Whether you are planting, installing a fence, or starting a larger project, always plan ahead before digging.

CALL 811 FIRST

Minnesota law requires you to contact Gopher State One Call at least 48 hours before digging, excluding weekends and holidays. Calling 811 or submitting a request online allows utilities to mark underground lines and helps prevent damage and injury.

KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Utilities mark lines up to your meter, but you are responsible for private lines on your property. This may include electric lines to outbuildings, sprinkler systems, gas lines, water and sewer lines, and pet fences. A private locator can help identify these.

DIG WITH CARE

Always wait for locates and dig carefully around marked areas. It is a simple step that helps prevent outages, costly repairs, and serious injury.

Visit gopherstateonecall.org or dial 811 before you dig.

OFFICE PHONE

(320) 864-3148
(800) 494-6272

24-HOUR OUTAGE PHONE

(800) 927-5685

WEBSITE

www.mcleodcoop.com

EMAIL ADDRESS

mcpainfo@mcleodcoop.com

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Ronald Meier

EDITOR

Dan Ehrke and Fuller Creative

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 1: Kirk Newman
(952) 955-3319

District 2: Jeff Kosek
(320) 510-1828

District 3: David Resch
Vice President
(952) 449-1793

District 4: Doug Kirtz
President
(320) 583-7673

District 5: Allan Duesterhoeft
(320) 587-9134

District 6: Gary Burdorf
Asst. Secretary-Treasurer
(507) 964-5815

District 7: Randy Hlavka
GRE Representative
(320) 583-0037

District 8: Jonathan Burgstahler
(320) 552-0273

District 9: Susan Anderson
Secretary-Treasurer
(952) 250-3109

**McLeod Cooperative Power
is an equal opportunity
employer and provider.**



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

As we prepare for the seasonal shift, remember to set your ceiling fan rotation accordingly. In winter months (or whenever your home heating system is running), fan blades should rotate clockwise, which produces an updraft that pushes warm air down. In summer months (or whenever your home cooling system is running), blades should rotate counterclockwise, which produces a downdraft or windchill effect that makes you feel cooler. When used correctly, ceiling fans can boost comfort and allow you to adjust the thermostat a few degrees for energy savings.



USPS 2220
PERIODICALS
POSTAGE PAID
HUTCHINSON, MN

3515 11th St. East
Glencoe, MN 55336

WWW.MCLEODCOOP.COM

The McLeod Cooperative Power News (USPS 2220) is published monthly by McLeod Cooperative Power Association, 3515 11th St. East, Glencoe, MN 55336-0070. Subscription rate: \$9.34 per year for members and \$18.69 per year for non-members.

Periodicals Postage Rate is at Hutchinson, MN, 55350 and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
McLeod Coop Power News, 3515 11th Street E,
Glencoe, MN 55336-0070

POWERING THROUGH SPRING SAFELY

Spring work moves fast, and so do the risks. With larger equipment in the field and more hands on deck, electrical safety should be part of your daily routine. A few intentional habits can help protect your crew, your equipment, and your operation all season long.



START EACH DAY WITH AWARENESS

- Take a few minutes to review the day's work and safety risks.
- Know where overhead lines are and plan routes accordingly.
- Train all workers, including seasonal help, on electrical hazards.

THINK BEFORE YOU MOVE EQUIPMENT

- Always look up before raising or transporting equipment.
- Keep safe clearance from overhead lines.
- Fold and unfold equipment well into the field, not near field edges.

WORK SMARTER NEAR POWER LINES

- Use a spotter when operating near lines or poles.
- Stay alert and communicate clearly with your team.

IF EQUIPMENT CONTACTS A LINE

- Stay inside the cab and call 911 immediately.
- Do not step out unless there is a fire.
- If you must exit, jump clear and hop away with feet together.

DON'T FORGET WHAT'S UNDERGROUND

- Call 811 before installing fence posts, tile, or new structures.



Spring is one of the busiest times on the farm. Taking a moment to plan ahead and stay aware can make all the difference in keeping everyone safe.