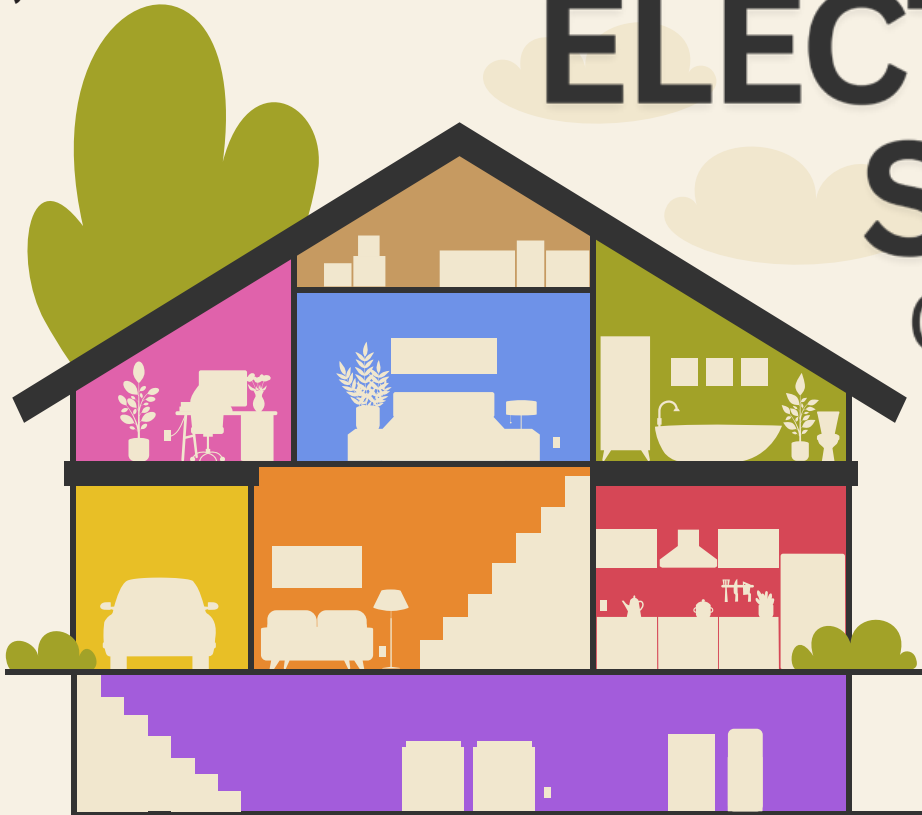


NORTHERN

L I G H T S

May 2026



ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKLIST

ROOM BY ROOM



**Beltrami Electric
Cooperative Inc.**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Check these monthly to keep your home and family safe.

Kitchen

- Clean refrigerator coils and allow space for airflow.
- Store and use appliances away from the sink.
- Use and test GFCI outlets.
- Inspect cords for cracks or frays.
- Keep cords off counters; unplug when not in use.

Bedroom

- Place and test smoke and CO detectors on every level and near sleeping areas.
- Keep cords out from under rugs or furniture.
- Unplug devices and chargers when not in use.
- Make sure lightbulbs are the correct wattage.
- Plug window AC units into a dedicated circuit.

Basement

- Ensure washer and dryer are stable and ventilated.
- Remove dryer lint after each use.
- Set water heater to 120°F or lower.
- Have furnace inspected and confirm proper ventilation.

Bathroom

- Keep appliances away from water (sink, toilet, tub, shower).
- Unplug appliances when not in use.
- Use and test GFCI outlets.

Living Room

- Use safety caps on unused outlets, especially if children or pets are present.
- Ensure electronics have space for airflow.
- Replace cracked light switch or outlet covers.
- Avoid overloading outlets, power strips and surge protectors.

Garage

- Use and test GFCI outlets.
- Inspect cords for cracks or damage.
- Unplug tools and appliances when not in use.
- Place refrigerators/freezers on dedicated appliance circuits.

Learn more at: [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org)



What it means to be a co-op director

by Jared Echternach, president and CEO

At Beltrami Electric Cooperative, our strength comes from our members. That includes the leadership guiding our decisions. Our board of directors is elected by you, to represent you. These individuals help shape critical decisions that impact our cooperative and the communities we serve. From setting service rates to guiding work plans and co-op policies, their role carries real responsibility. Simply put, the direction of your cooperative depends on strong, thoughtful leadership.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Good governance starts with engaged members. That means not only voting in elections but also encouraging qualified individuals to step forward and serve. We need a strong pool of candidates. Fresh perspectives and new ideas help keep our cooperative responsive and focused on what matters most: you.

HOW IT WORKS:

Beltrami Electric is divided into nine districts, each represented by a director. Every year, elections are held in three of those districts. Directors are nominated by members in their district and then elected by all members in the general election. Any member in good standing who meets the qualifications of a director may run for a seat in the district where their primary residence is located.

INTERESTED IN SERVING? HERE'S WHAT TO KNOW:

- Candidates must submit a completed candidate packet to our corporate office at least five business days before their district meeting.

- Nominations will be accepted during district meetings held in June for Districts 2, 4 and 6.
- The top two candidates from each district advance to the general election ballot.

COMMITMENT TO SERVE:

Serving on the board requires time, dedication and a willingness to learn.

- Monthly board meetings are held the last Wednesday and typically last four to seven hours.
- Directors also participate in training and educational opportunities throughout the year.
- On average, directors commit about two full days per month, plus additional time depending on training and engagement.

Equally important, directors stay connected with members and bring forward the needs and concerns of the communities they serve.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Strong directors help ensure a strong cooperative. If you know someone who would serve our membership well, encourage them to run; and when it is time, make your voice heard by voting. Directors matter. Together, we can continue building a cooperative that serves us all. If you would like more information about board service or would like to request a candidate packet, please contact our office.

Beltrami Board Director Sue Krigen receives Red Lantern Award

Sue Krigen, Beltrami Electric vice chair and board director for District 8, was presented with the Red Lantern Award by Minnkota Power Cooperative, recognizing her 10 years of service as a cooperative board member. The award reads: *“Just as the lantern was the friendly symbol of light in rural neighborhoods in bygone days, so is rural electrification the symbol of this era of abundant light, progress and better living.”* Congratulations, Sue!



2026 DISTRICT MEETINGS

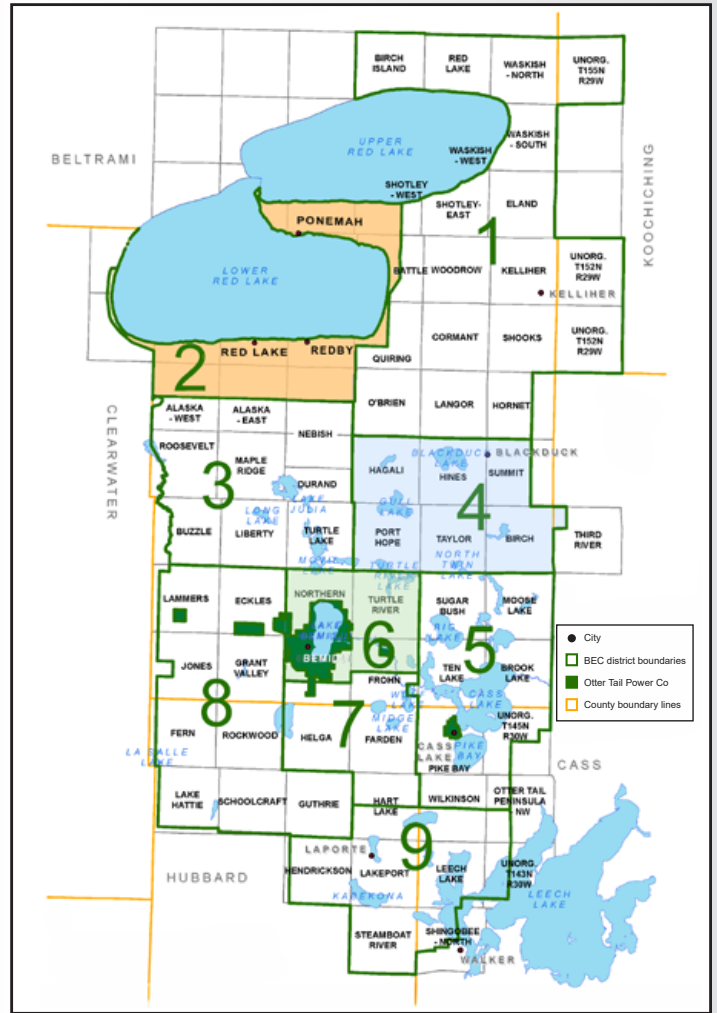
TO BE HELD IN LATE JUNE

District meetings are held annually in districts with directors up for reelection, and this June, they will take place in Districts 2, 4 and 6. Official business will be conducted at the district meetings, including the nomination of a director candidate.

- Nominations for qualified candidates from your district to Beltrami Electric’s board of directors will be accepted at this meeting.
 - o The top two candidates, as determined by popular vote at the district meeting, will have their names on the general election ballot in August.

If you are interested in seeking a directorship position and desire more information, please contact our office at **(218) 444-2540** and request a director candidate packet.

NOTE: Members interested in running for the board of directors must submit a completed candidate packet to the cooperative’s corporate office at least five (5) business days before the district meeting where the election will be held. The cooperative will use this information to verify eligibility for the director position.



2 DISTRICT 2
Incumbent: Charlie Perkins

Thursday, June 25, 6 p.m.
Red Lake Nation College, Student Union, 15480 Migizi Dr, Red Lake

4 DISTRICT 4
Incumbent: Craig Gaasvig

Tuesday, June 23, 6 p.m.
Beltrami Electric Community Room, 4111 Technology Dr NW, Bemidji

6 DISTRICT 6
Incumbent: Rick Coe

Wednesday, June 24, 6 p.m.
Beltrami Electric Community Room, 4111 Technology Dr NW, Bemidji

MARCH 2026 BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Beltrami Electric’s board of directors conducted its regular monthly meeting on **Wednesday, March 25, 2026**. A quorum of directors was in attendance.

- President and CEO Echernach and the board discussed recent safety successes and observations.
 - President and CEO Echernach made his monthly report, including financials, audit report, employee updates and legislative issues affecting our cooperative.
 - Jay Welsh, Brady Martz & Associates, presented the 2025 audit report giving Beltrami Electric Cooperative a clean audit opinion.
 - Arlene Hogquist presented the January and February financial reports.
 - Arlene Hogquist presented the 2025 patronage capital margins and allocation.
 - Directors and President and CEO Echernach discussed upcoming meetings and events.
- The following actions were taken:**
- Approved the consent agenda.
 - Approved the 2025 audit report.
 - Approved the 2025 patronage capital allocation.
 - Approved director and president and CEO expenses.
- The next board meeting will be held Wednesday, May 27, 2026.*



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBER AND HONOR

Beltrami Electric’s offices will be closed on

Monday, May 25,

in observance of Memorial Day.



MORE THAN JUST ELECTRICITY: WHAT YOUR ELECTRIC BILL COVERS

Your bill covers more than the energy you use. It also pays for poles, wires, transformers and other essential equipment. These costs remain, even if your energy use is low.

Beltrami Electric members value affordability and reliability. To deliver both, we continue investing in system improvements.

Each year, our Construction Work Plan includes:

- Upgrading aging lines
- Converting overhead lines to underground where it improves reliability, safety or long-term value
- Relocating equipment for road projects, including the upcoming Beltrami County Road 22 project

At the same time, costs continue to rise. Since 2018:

- Pad-mount transformers are **up 140%**
- Underground wire is **up 63%**
- Wood poles are **up 35%**

These increases reflect a broader trend across the utility industry.

Underground vs. overhead lines

More than 75% of our system is underground.

- **Underground:**
More reliable in severe weather, but costs more to install and takes longer to repair
- **Overhead:**
Less expensive and quicker to repair, but more exposed to weather and tree damage

Both are essential and must be replaced as they age. We have invested more than \$180 million in infrastructure. As a member-owner, you share in that investment. Your bill supports a system built to deliver safe, reliable and affordable power for years to come.

2026 BEC CONSTRUCTION WORK PLAN PROJECTS

This year, we will invest \$6.8 million in electric system upgrades across our service area to strengthen reliability and reduce outage durations.

1. Beltrami County Rd #22 (Island View Drive)

The existing underground line will be replaced in some areas and relocated to accommodate the reconstruction of the county road. This project started in 2025 and will be completed in 2026.

2. Guthrie Feeder 22

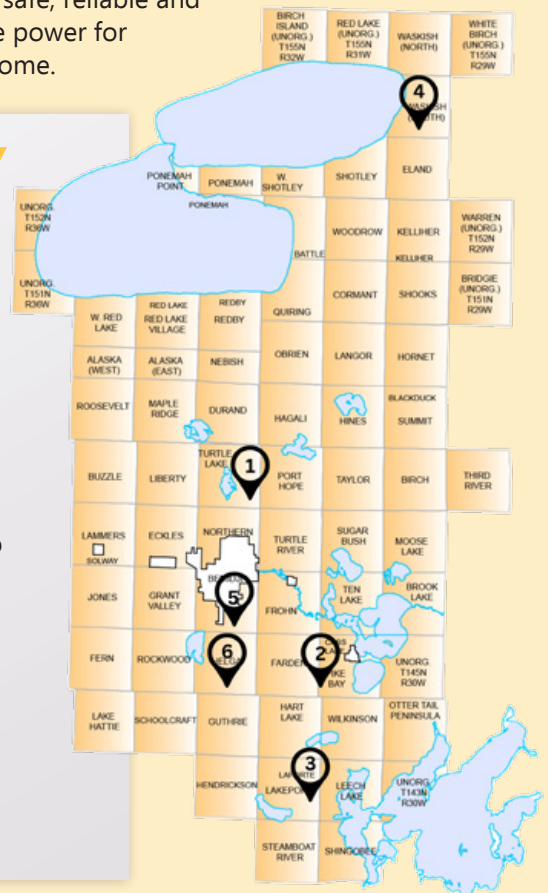
This project involves converting 4 miles of three-phase overhead to an underground line.

3. South side of Steamboat Lake

This project will replace 4.5 miles of aging two-phase overhead line with a three-phase underground line.

Underground line replacements

Aging underground line replacements will take place throughout our territory. Projects are planned in the following townships: Waskish (4), Bemidji (5) and Helga (6).





Bemidji student selected for 2026 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

Beltrami Electric Cooperative has selected **Jacobi Burmeister Pater** as its 2026 delegate for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Jacobi, a junior at Bemidji High School, earned the opportunity after submitting an essay describing what makes Beltrami Electric Cooperative unique and how electric cooperatives differ from other utilities. She is the daughter of McKenzi Burmeister and Brett Pater of Bemidji.



The BIG opportunity

During the trip, students will:

- Visit historic landmarks and national monuments
- Meet with members of Congress
- Learn how government decisions affect rural electric cooperatives and the communities they serve

A STUDENT LEADER

Jacobi is actively involved in her school and community. She currently serves as a student representative on the Bemidji School Board, volunteers through the National Honor Society and plans to pursue an interest in political science. *"We're excited for Jacobi to experience the Youth Tour and engage with the legislative process firsthand,"* said Angela Lyseng, Youth Tour coordinator for Beltrami Electric. *"It's an incredible opportunity to see how decisions made in Washington can impact rural communities like ours."*

WHY IT MATTERS

We have sponsored a local student for the Youth Tour since 1993. The national program supports **Cooperative Principle #5 - Education, Training and Information** by introducing high school students to the cooperative business model while helping them better understand civic engagement and public policy. At a time when energy issues are central to national discussions, the Youth Tour helps inspire the next generation of informed leaders and cooperative advocates.

Tell Us How We're Doing

Your feedback helps guide our cooperative. We invite you to take a moment to complete a short **Member Survey**.

- It's quick - just five questions.
- Your feedback helps us improve our services to you and plan for the future.

Scan the QR code or visit the link below to take the survey.
Member Survey Link: surveymonkey.com/r/Beltrami2026



Thank you for sharing your feedback.



Classifieds

Classified ads rules

- Ads are due by the following dates:
 - o **JUNE ISSUE:** Submit by May 5.
- Please submit ads here: beltramelectric.com/submit-ad.
- NO real estate, rental, personal or commercial ads will be accepted.
- All ads must be 50 words or less and typed or printed clearly.
- Editor reserves the right to edit or reject any ad.
- Members may only submit one for sale and one wanted or free ad per issue.
- Ads are published at no charge as space permits on a first-received, first-printed basis, **with no guarantee your ad will appear.**
- Ads are only allowed to be repeated for **three consecutive months** and must be resubmitted each month.

For Sale:

First City Lions Annual Garage Sale. Saturday, May 9, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Eckles Town Hall Community Center, 9735 Cardinal Road NW, Bemidji, MN. First City Lions are hosting an awesome bake sale and a huge rummage sale. All proceeds go to local charities.

16' Lund aluminum boat w/steering console, 35 hp Mercury w/1985 spartan trailer \$950. Four different 14' aluminum boats, \$300-\$600/each. Three aluminum canoes, \$400-\$700 each. 8' pickup box trailer, \$500. Dry firewood, cut and split, you haul, \$175/pickup load. Call Gary 218-760-8266.

Excellent condition 1988 18-foot StarCraft boat and trailer with 90-hp Evinrude motor and 10-hp Mercury 4-stroke kicker motor, stored inside, \$8,900, 218-243-2497.

Purebred Dachshund puppies, born Feb. 10, 2026. Text 218-368-9930.

Passenger side-view mirror, fits 2008-2016 Ford Super Duty. Used, great shape, heated remote, no signal or power telescope in. Mike at 218-444-4767 (land line no text) \$20.

Large oak-top coffee table/painted legs \$75. Large round patio table/4 chairs/chair pads \$125. Wicker chair/green trim \$50. Single bed frame/mattress/box spring/gray wood headboard/sheet set and comforter \$250. Lamp \$25. OBO on each. 218-766-2777.

Scooter w/cushion for after surgery, new \$175 will sell for \$95. Schmidt beer scenic can lamps: elk, deer \$25. 218-760-3298.

Clam Voyager TCX fish house, good condition, and a Clam towbar to tow it with your snowmobile or ATV. Also includes a Mr. Buddy heater and an Eskimo S33 Stingray ice auger. Asking \$75/obo. 218-987-2308.

Whirlpool washer and Amana dryer, 1½-yr old, \$600/pair. Greenworks electric 21-inch single-stage snowblower with two batteries and charger, 1½-yr old, \$200. Bemidji location 920-988-9526.

JD 24T square baler. Call 218-751-8191 before 7 p.m.

Spotting scope: Vortex Viper HD 20-60 x 85mm with angled eyepiece. Excellent condition. High-quality optics, waterproof, fog proof, versatile magnification and focus. Comes with a custom neoprene cover, product manual and original box (tripod not included). Purchased 2021. Vortex lifetime warranty extends to new owner. \$580. 218-243-3120.

Steamer trunk, footlocker trunk, and aluminum underbed locker. \$35 for all

three. Clean and dry storage for clothing or other items. Call 218-368-0352.

2017 travel trailer, Keystone Cougar X-Lite 21RBS. Slide-out dinette, TV and entertainment center, power awning, 8-cu.-ft. fridge, A/C, dual axle, 25'-9" overall length, weight distr. hitch and misc. camping equipment included. Low miles, one owner and very good condition. \$14,900. 612-810-1443.

Greenworks 21-inch electric lawn mower with extra battery and extra blade. Very good condition. \$250. Call or text Carl at 218-556-5085.

2022 Forest River Grey Wolf Limited for sale. 21-ft travel trailer with limited use. Very clean and well-maintained. Water heater and kitchen range never used, like new. Full refrigerator, microwave, air conditioner, stove, etc. \$15,500. If interested, call Jeff 218-308-4964.

Ruger 10-22 barrels, new factory OEM, not bull barrels, blued \$100, stainless \$125. Mike at 218-444-4767 land line no text.

Echo 58V commercial string trimmer w/ brush cutter, like new (tool only, no battery) \$200. Rosineer rosin cold press, like new, \$300. Text or call. 218-766-4741.

ShoreStation vertical boat lift: 3,600 lb. capacity, canopy acceptable. Local lake. Make offer. Shark steam pocket mop, optimal for every type of floor. Cleans and sanitizes flat surfaces, countertops, \$59. New cordless handheld rechargeable vacuum with upholstery and 2-in-1 tools. Indispensable and handy for kitchen, car and baseboard cleaning \$49. 320-583-0471.

Rheem performance water heater. 40-gallon electric, brand new, never used. \$450. Call or text between 3-7 p.m. 218-232-7827.

Commercial double-stacked LP convection oven can be converted to NG. 16cf upright propane freezer. Gas

lawn edger. Rototiller. Wood smoker. Text /phone 218-556-5818.

Ottomans with foam cushion top and metal support spring, ivory upholstery; 28" L x 20" W x 14" H; pair \$78. Five-line retractable clothesline, new in original box, made in the US, \$39. Craftsman tractor lift for front-engine lawn tractors, like new, \$110. 218-536-1341.

Minn Kota PowerDrive pontoon trolling motor with foot control and quick-release bracket. 54-lb thrust and 48-inch shaft. \$500. Minn Kota deckhand anchor lift with quick-release bracket. \$195. 218-407-0755.

Two Queen bedspreads, \$25 ea. Call to get photos emailed. 4-slice electric toaster, \$25. Electric mixer, \$25. Electric frypan, \$25. 218-586-2884.

Wanted:

Looking for a qualified automotive painter to finish the paint on a car for me. I have the paint, the paint masks and an almost empty garage for work to be done. Some sanding to be done. If interested, you can call 218-444-2280. Ask for Steve.

Pasture to rent in Solway area. Joel at 218-766-7817.

Looking for someone to haul a few brush piles off my property from last summer's storm. 218-751-7693.

Looking for gently used canning jars, especially jelly-size. Lids and seals optional. 218-556-0212.

Looking for hunting land in the area, 20-80 acres, text or call Luke at 218-556-0553.

Want to trade: Largemouth quart jars for smallmouth quart jars. Wanted wood chipper. 218-243-3112.

Free:

Free older 40-foot roll-in dock. Needs new wooden dock sections. Cass Lake area. 218-289-2033.

MAY READER'S CONTEST

For your chance to be entered in a drawing to **win a \$10 credit** on your bill, correctly answer the questions and include with your payment or mail to: BEC, P.O. Box 488, Bemidji, MN 56619. Or email answers to info@beltramelectric.com with the subject line "Reader's Contest." Be sure to include your name and BEC account number. **Entries must be received by May 25.**

1. 2026 district meetings will be held in districts _____, _____, and _____ in June.
2. More than _____% of Beltrami Electric's lines are underground.
3. The average donation to Operation Round Up is \$_____ per year.

Member Name:	BEC Account Number:	Email address:
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Congratulations to our March contest winner: Frank & Gail Kelsey

WE ARE LOOKING

FOR YOU!



Beltrami Electric is looking for the following:

- Kylee Loynachan (*Tenstrike, Minn.*)
- Shyanne Rosebear White and Dawn Rosebear (*Blackduck, Minn.*)
- Clayton P. Lincoln (*Bemidji, Minn.*)
- Andrew Anderson (*Cass Lake, Minn.*)

Please call 218-444-2540 if you have any information.

OPERATION ROUND UP® Awards Grants in April



Beltrami Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up® program continues to demonstrate the impact of small contributions making a big difference in our communities.

In April, the Beltrami Electric Cooperative Trust Board reviewed 30 grant requests totaling \$75,899. With \$42,412 available, the board awarded funding to 18 local organizations supporting important community programs.

HOW OPERATION ROUND UP WORKS

Operation Round Up allows participating members to round their electric bill up to the nearest dollar. The average donation is about 50 cents per month, or \$6 per year, but when combined, these contributions create meaningful funding for local needs.

KEY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- ♦ 100% of donations support local nonprofits and community projects.
- ♦ Funds are held in a separate trust for transparency and accountability.
- ♦ A five-member volunteer board of co-op members oversees allocations.
- ♦ Participation is voluntary, and members may opt in or out at any time.

THANK YOU to all members who participate in Operation Round Up – your generosity helps power stronger communities.

BELTRAMI ELECTRIC TRUST BOARD FOR OPERATION ROUND UP

Kay Mack, Bemidji; Miriam Osborn-Dougherty, Blackduck; Sharon Hadrava, Laporte; Jean Diffley, Bemidji; Marne Waldo, Kelliher

THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS WERE AWARDED OPERATION ROUND UP GRANTS IN APRIL:

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM	GRANT
Bemidji Area Schools Early Childhood Program	Paul Bunyan Center's early childhood program outdoor play equipment	\$ 1,060
Bemidji Indoor Sports Commission	Neilson Fieldhouse security camera expansion project	\$ 2,500
Bemidji Lions Charitable Foundation	Greenwood Cemetery gravestone restoration project	\$ 2,250
Bemidji Marching Band Booster Club	Bemidji Marching Band 2026 summer tour	\$ 750
Bemidji Veterans Memorial Board	Purple Heart Memorial	\$ 2,500
Blackduck Area Food Shelf	Food purchases and refrigerator and freezer to store food	\$ 5,000
Blackduck High School	Golf simulator for the school golf teams to practice during the off-season	\$ 1,000
Buzzle Osterdalen Cemetery	Replace gate to cemetery	\$ 500
Evergreen Youth & Family Services, Inc.	Electrical installation for a backup generator at the Evergreen Crisis Shelter	\$ 3,000
Headwaters Science Center	Aquaponic food growing exhibit for fresh vegetables for animals at HSC	\$ 2,565
Kelliher Public School	Kelliher Kids Childcare Center: summer learning school-age childcare expansion project	\$ 1,687
Laporte Community Food Shelf	Food purchases, hygiene products, cleaning supplies	\$ 3,000
Lead for Inclusion	Inclusive Youth Leadership Summit	\$ 1,000
Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society	Renovate a historic building into a Nature Classroom	\$ 1,600
Northern Lights Council	Career exploration opportunities for students at TrekNorth, Voyageurs, Kingdom Builders & St. Philip's schools	\$ 1,500
Northwoods Caregivers	Replenish supplies and materials for First City Visitation Services	\$ 2,500
Society of St. Vincent de Paul – St. Philip's Conference	Hope in Bemidji	\$ 5,000
United Way of Bemidji Area	Backpack Buddies program in Bemidji, Blackduck, Kelliher and Red Lake	\$ 5,000

NORTHERN

L I G H T S

MAY 2026 | VOL. 73 | NO. 5

Northern Lights (USPS 016488)

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OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Chair John Lund, DISTRICT 7

Vice Chair Sue Kringen, DISTRICT 8

Secretary Murl Nord, DISTRICT 1

Treasurer Sharon Lembke, DISTRICT 9

Directors: Charlie Perkins, DISTRICT 2; Kevin Geerdes, DISTRICT 3; Craig Gaasvig, DISTRICT 4; Robert Wallner, DISTRICT 5; Rick Coe, DISTRICT 6

President and CEO Jared Echternach

Editor Angela Lyseng

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Monday – Friday

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1-800-955-6083

Website: www.beltramielectric.com

Email: info@beltramielectric.com

MN STATE ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS

Any time you or an electrician does wiring or other electrical work at your home or farm, Minnesota state law requires a state wiring inspector to conduct a proper inspection of the work. A rough-in inspection must be made before any wiring is covered. A final inspection is also required. Find service territories for electrical inspectors here: <https://workplace.doli.state.mn.us/jurisdiction/>

BELTRAMI & HUBBARD COUNTIES:

Wade Koons | 218-580-8589
wade.koons@state.mn.us

CASS & HUBBARD COUNTIES:

Tony Kohrs | 218-616-1554
tony.kohrs@state.mn.us

GOPHER STATE ONE CALL

1-800-252-1166 or 811
www.gopherstateonecall.org



Anyone who plans to dig is required by law to notify the state of their intentions at least 48 hours in advance. All digging requires a 48-hour notification so that buried telephone lines, TV cable, pipelines, and utility electric lines can be located to ensure that none will be severed or damaged.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To provide excellent value to our members through the safe delivery of reliable electric service, excellent member service and innovative energy solutions at fair and reasonable prices.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Beltrami Electric Cooperative Inc.

® Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Connecting Communities. Powering Life.



GreenTouch™

By Minnesota Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

A VOLUNTEER EVENT HOSTED BY BELTRAMI ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Volunteers Needed!

Please join us at
Lake Bemidji State Park
Thursday, May 14
3 - 6 p.m.*

* A picnic meal will be provided for volunteers at 6 p.m.



Help the park prepare for the 2026 season.



Great opportunity for students needing volunteer hours!



Raking, picking up debris, ditch cleanup and more!



Tools provided, bring your own work gloves.

For more information or to sign up to volunteer, contact Angela at 218-444-3689 or email info@beltramielectric.com