



# BENCO Electric Cooperative Link

DECEMBER 2023

## DISTRICT MEETINGS SET FOR JANUARY

District meetings will be held for BENCO Electric Cooperative members in Districts 1, 4 and 9 in January, 2024.

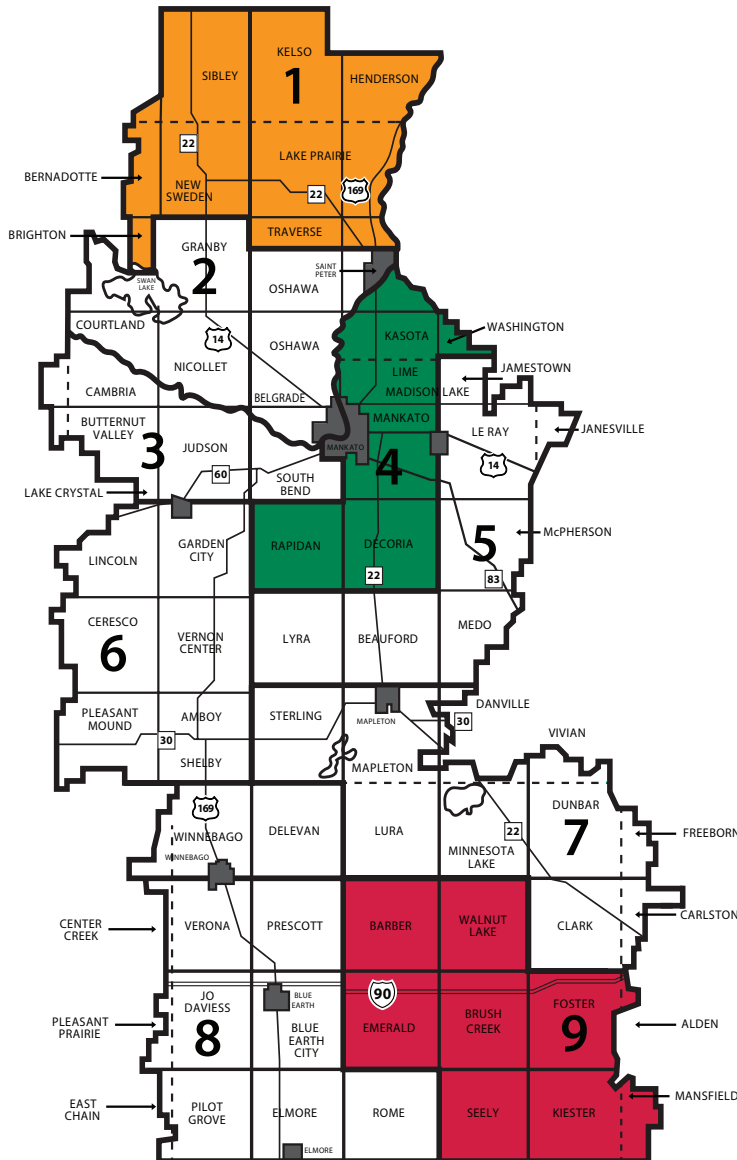
Members living in these districts are welcome to attend their meeting where the sole purpose will be to choose a nominee(s), for Director of the Association, to be certified as such to the Annual Meeting of the Members of the Association.

Members living in the following areas are considered members of District 1 and may vote at the district meeting: the townships of Alfsborg, Sibley, Kelso and Henderson in Sibley County; New Sweden, Bernadotte, Lake Prairie,

Brighton and Traverse in Nicollet County.

Members living in the following areas are considered members of District 4 and may vote at the district meeting: the townships of Kasota and Washington in LeSueur County; Lime, Mankato, Rapidan and Decoria, and the City of Mankato in Blue Earth County.

Members living in the following areas are considered members of District 9 and may vote at the district meeting: the townships of Barber, Walnut Lake, Emerald, Brush Creek, Foster, Seely and Kiester in Faribault County; the Cities of Bricelyn, Kiester and Walters in Faribault County and the part of the City of Frost in Emerald Township in Faribault County; and the township of Alden and part of the township of Mansfield in Freeborn County.



Nominating committees for District 1, 4 and 9 met in November. The candidates to come forward to the District Meetings from the Nominating Committee Meetings are: District 1 - Terry Genelin, Incumbent; District 4 - John Wells, Incumbent; Bill Andert and Joe Butzer; and District 9 - Scott Johnson, Incumbent.

Candidates may also be nominated from the floor at the District Meeting. Once a member registers at the meeting that member may vote.

This is where BENCO members decide who will represent their district before it goes to the general membership at the Annual Meeting on April 6, 2024 at Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center, Mankato. Please note the date, time and location of your district meeting as listed below.

### DISTRICT 1

Wednesday, January 3, 2024 • 1:00 pm  
Scandian Grove Lutheran Church, Norseland

### DISTRICT 4

Tuesday, January 2, 2024 • 1:00 pm  
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Good Thunder

### DISTRICT 9

Thursday, January 4, 2024 • 1:00 pm  
The Golden Bubble • Wells

# CEO CORNER

BENCO continues to invest in our electric distribution system and is fortunate to be in a growing region. We installed many new residential and commercial services throughout our service territory this year.

This year BENCO dispersed over \$51,000 to area nonprofit organizations through our Operation Round Up program. Thank you to all of our members who participate in this program.

We hope you and your family are staying safe and healthy this holiday season. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Cooperatively yours,



# FROM THE BOARD

**October 26, 2023  
Brad Leiding Presided**

The board reviewed and approved the minutes of the September 28, 2023 board meeting.

Abby reported working on the 2024 budget.

Tim reported on the progress at the Rush River substation.

Jordan reported on cyber-security education efforts during October.

The board approved Sheila Opsal and Dennis Koziolk as Operation Round Up Trust board members for Districts 2 and 9, respectively.



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## PCA UPDATE

**ACTUAL PCA FOR  
NOVEMBER**

**\$0.0285**

**ESTIMATED PCA FOR  
DECEMBER**

**\$0.0366**

**BENCO Electric Cooperative will be closed on Monday, December 25 and Monday, January 1 to observe the Christmas and New Year holidays. Please continue to report power outages by calling 507-387-7963.**

The Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) is due to changes in the monthly wholesale rate from our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE).



# CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS!

Each year BENCO Electric Cooperative partners with the National Rural Electrical Cooperative Association (NRECA) and Minnesota Rural Electrical Association (MREA) to award an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, DC for one high school sophomore or junior whose parents are BENCO members.



BENCO's Washington, DC Youth Tour delegate will embark on a jam-packed schedule, June 18 - 23, 2024, including visits to the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Smithsonian National Museum, Mount Vernon and the FBI Headquarters. They may also take in a show at the Kennedy Center, dinner at the Hard Rock Cafe and spend a day on Capitol Hill, meeting Minnesota's Senators and Representatives.

BENCO's 2022 Washington DC Youth Tour Delegate says, "This was a phenomenal experience and has made me want to focus on pursuing a career in law. Washington, DC is an important city and inspired me to be one of the change-makers."

This is a great opportunity for anyone with an interest in our nation's government and your local electric cooperative.

To apply, submit a one-page, typed essay titled "*Why I want to go to Washington, DC*". Please include the student's name, parent's name, email address, name of high school and a list of activities the student is involved in.

Please mail your entry to: BENCO Electric Cooperative, Attn: Chelsea, PO BOX 8, Mankato, MN 56002. Entries must be received no later than Friday, February 2, 2024.



# NEED HELP WITH YOUR UTILITY BILLS? ENERGY ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE

BENCO wants to help our members find energy assistance resources to help bring their account current. Minnesota's Energy Assistance Program (EAP) increased the amount of funding available to help members pay costs associated with heat and electricity. Funding is available on a first-come, first-served basis, so it is crucial to contact an energy assistance agency as soon as possible.

EAP helps eligible households maintain affordable, continuous and safe home energy. Services include bill payment assistance, home energy crisis intervention, outreach, energy advocacy, information about utility consumer rights and referrals.

Individuals must occupy the residence for which the energy assistance benefits are being applied and meet the household income guidelines.

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance, visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance>.

If you are experiencing difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for either of these programs, please contact BENCO as soon as possible at 507-387-7963.

## ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS SERVING BENCO MEMBERS:

### BROWN COUNTY FAMILY SERVICES

PO BOX 788, New Ulm, MN 56073  
507-354-8246

### MINNESOTA VALLEY ACTION COUNCIL

PO BOX 3327, Mankato, MN 56002

Blue Earth County - 507-345-2433

Faribault County - 507-526-5291

LeSueur County - 507-357-4246

Martin County - 507-238-1663

Nicollet County - 507-934-5224

Sibley County - 507-237-2981

Waseca County - 507-835-8240

Watonwan County - 507-375-5748

### SEMCAAC OF FREEBORN COUNTY

PO BOX 549, Rushford, MN 55971  
800-944-3281

## WHERE, OH WHERE?

The following is a list of former BENCO members who have unclaimed capital credit checks or credit balances on their inactive account. Please contact Angie at 507-387-7963 with any information on locating the former BENCO members. A full list of members with unclaimed balances can be found at [BENCO.org/capital-credits](http://BENCO.org/capital-credits).

### M

Melissa Miska, Mankato  
Malik Mitchell, Rosemount  
Martin Mitchell, Mankato  
Paul T. Mitchell, Mankato  
Marcus I. Mittelstadt, Frost  
Mike Mixon, Winnebago  
Jean Mock-Griffin, North Mankato

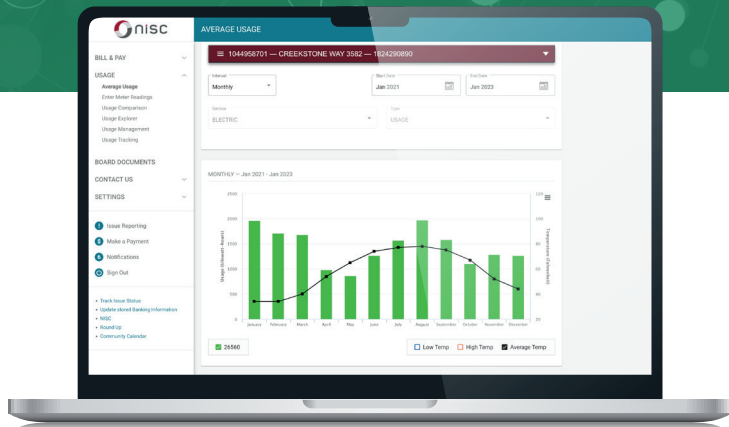
Mary C. Moehring, Taylor Falls  
Mike Moellenbeck, Kouts, IN  
Paula R. Moerer, Nebraska City, NE  
Katie H. Moeri, Mankato  
Wayne C. Moerke, Kasota  
Emran Mohammed, St. Clair  
Anthony Mohr, Waseca  
David Mohr, Prior Lake  
Sybil Moja, Wells  
Gwen Moldan, Weston, WI  
Emily Molenaar, Lake Crystal  
Douglas Molitor, Worthington  
Eugene Molitor, Zimmerman  
Mary Molitor, Nicollet  
Steve Moller, Mankato  
Craig Molnar, Ocala, FL  
Joanne Moncelle, St. Peter  
Scott Moncelle, Lakeville  
Jose Mondragon, Alden  
Keisha K. Moniz, Lake Crystal

Robyn C. Montag, Rochester  
Alexandria Montalto, North Mankato  
Jenaka Montemurno, Mankato  
Ericka Montgomery, Mankato  
Kelli L. Montgomery, Mankato  
Marland Montgomery, North Mankato  
Dan R. Moore, Blue Earth  
Stephen S. Moore, St. Paul  
Thomas Moore, Mankato  
Celene L. Moos  
Gilma Morales, Mankato  
Doug Moravek, Sioux City, IA  
Duane D. More, Blue Earth  
James More, Mankato  
Stephanie More, Mapleton  
William More, Mankato  
Bryan E. Mork, Savage  
Phillip Morness, Mankato  
Linda A. Morrichal, Mankato  
Lee W. Morris, Mapleton



# SMARTHUB UPGRADE UNLOCKED

Smart Management. Smart Life. SmartHub.



Manage your account like never before with the new and improved SmartHub web application. A simplified, yet enhanced design is here! This new version of SmartHub puts your usage and payment details front and center for fast, easy access and the simplified menu structure makes navigating the site a breeze.

## ARE YOU NEW TO SMARTHUB?

SmartHub is BENCO's user-friendly software that allows members to manage their accounts from a web portal (desktop) or a mobile device. Through SmartHub, members are able to pay bills (manually or automatically), sign-up for and receive outage and email notifications, sign-up for paperless billing and monitor electric usage (current and historical). Members can also manage their contact information in SmartHub. Read on to learn more!

## WHAT IS NEEDED TO REGISTER FOR SMARTHUB?

BENCO members will need an email address and your account number. Your account number can be located on your bill.

To register for SmartHub, or to learn more, visit [BENCO.org/SmartHub](https://www.benco.org/SmartHub).

## SMARTHUB CHECKLIST:

- Registration:** You'll need your email address and account number. Your account number can be found on your latest bill.
- Consider signing up for **Paperless Billing:**  
*This can be activated during your account registration.*
- Download the SmartHub app** from the Apple or Google Play app store.  
*Search for "SmartHub" in the app store and install on your device.*
- Consider signing up for **Auto Pay**, using debit / credit card or bank draft.  
*Click on "Bill & Pay" and then click on "Auto Pay Program" link.*
- Set up **notifications via email or text message.**  
*Under the Notifications menu, click "Manage Contacts" to add email and/or phone number(s). Enter verification code to activate. Click on "Manage Notifications" to set up email and/or text alerts using the contact info entered.*

For assistance or more information about SmartHub, please contact BENCO at 507-387-7963 or visit us online at [BENCO.org](https://www.benco.org) and click on "My Account".



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# what's cooking?

Receive a \$20 credit on your electric bill if your recipe appears in the newsletter.



## BREAKFAST PIZZA

From the Kitchen of: Susan Cory

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. pork sausage
- 1 pkg. crescent rolls
- 5 eggs
- 1/4 C milk
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 1 C frozen hash brown potatoes
- 1 C shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 Tbsp. grated parmesan cheese

### Directions:

Cook sausage and drain excess fat. Separate crescent roll dough into eight triangles and place into ungreased 12 in. pizza pan with points toward center. Press over bottom and up the sides to form a crust. Seal perforations. Spoon sausage over crust and sprinkle with potatoes. Top with cheddar cheese. In a small bowl, beat eggs, milk, salt and pepper. Pour over crust. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese over all. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 - 30 minutes.



This newsletter is published monthly by BENCO Electric Cooperative.

**Office Hours:** Mon -Fri - 7:30 am - 4:00 pm  
**Phone:** 387-7963 or 1-888-792-3626

**Outages/After Hours:**  
387-7964 or 1-888-792-3626

Kathy Gerber - Member Services Manager  
Chelsea Germo - Editor

### Board Meetings:

Board meetings are held the last Thursday of each month. Members are welcome to contact directors with items of interest in advance of the meeting or if they wish to attend. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### Board of Directors:

**Brad Leiding** - President - District 3  
**Marilyn Lynch** - Vice President - District 5  
**Scott Johnson** - Secretary - District 9  
**Terry Genelin** - Treasurer - District 1  
**Don Westphal** - District 2  
**John Wells** - District 4 - MREA Director  
**Blake Meshke** - District 6  
**Gary Stenzel** - District 7 - GRE Director  
**Duane Ehrich** - District 8  
**Dave Sunderman** - CEO  
**Christopher M. Roe** - Attorney

**ENTER TO WIN. SEND YOUR FAVORITE RECIPE TO:**

BENCO Electric Cooperative, Attn: Chelsea, PO Box 8, Mankato, MN 56002