



Co-op Advantage

October 2021
National Co-op Month
#PowerOn

People powered - Careers in Energy Month

We're celebrating Careers in Energy Month by highlighting a few of our newest employees. They have different job duties but all three provide an essential service to our 63,000 members.



Aaron Christensen

AARON is our Finance Analyst and started at ECE in May. He grew up on a dairy farm outside of Stanchfield and currently lives in Pine City, where he appreciates the small-town atmosphere. In his spare time, he enjoys gardening, restoring old gas pumps and classic cars, attending car shows, and building furniture.

Some of Aaron's job duties include analyzing data and trends, providing reports, and maintaining records. He likes the fact that the co-op encourages employees to volunteer their time for good causes, and especially appreciates the technological advancements such as electric vehicles and grid securities. He says, "There are many stable careers with options to grow within a co-op."

"The energy industry is an excellent choice if you are looking for a career that is continuing to evolve."



Beth Ramberg

BETH came aboard in February as a Contact Specialist in our Braham front office. Beth and her husband, Mason, live in Braham with their daughter Alayna. Beth enjoys camping on the North Shore, traveling, mentoring for 4-H, and competing at local horse shows.

Much of her job requires working directly with our members, like processing payments and verifying account information. Beth's favorite part of ECE is the friendly atmosphere and non-stop encouragement. As she explains, "My co-workers are always rooting for my success. There's a lot of room to grow, as well as plenty of opportunities for different skill sets. There are so many talented individuals that help make ECE successful."

"You don't have to be an electrician to work at an electric co-op."



Jake Klocke

JAKE joined ECE as a Staking Engineer in January. Jake and his wife, Sara, live in Askov with their children Luke and Laura. His family enjoys the outdoors, working in the woods, hunting, fishing, making hay, and riding on the side-by-side through their property.

Though the job varies, a few of Jake's duties include designing, routing, and staking distribution lines. He appreciates how ECE promotes a positive work environment and provides all the necessary tools and training to be successful. Jake points out, "If you have any interest in a career in energy, jump on the opportunity to experience the co-op firsthand. You will not be disappointed."

"The co-op culture is one that you need to experience to fully understand how great it is."



Ready to learn more about working in the energy industry? Visit [getintoenergy.com](https://www.getintoenergy.com)!



Watt's Cookin' calendar contest

Thank you for submitting your recipes for the 2022 Watt's Cookin' member calendar! We received an astounding 301 recipes for consideration!

Winners will receive an \$85 energy credit in honor of ECE's 85th anniversary. All winners will be notified by mail.

The free calendar will be available this December featuring the selected recipes. Pick one up in our Braham lobby or in one of the outside bins at our Finlayson, Milaca, and Superior locations.

New electric vehicle charging station

As more electric vehicles (EVs) take to our roadways, the need for charging infrastructure will grow. A new EV charging station is now available for use at Banning State Park in Sandstone, MN.

We partnered with our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), to place two EV chargers in the parking lot by Teacher's Overlook. The chargers are free to use.



Pictured L-R: Shelby Kok (DNR), Mark Nelson and John Bosman (ECE), Rodney De Fouw (GRE), Clarissa Payne (DNR), and David Ranallo (GRE).



USING A GENERATOR?

8 DANGEROUS MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE



1 IN ENCLOSED SPACES

Always use it in a well-ventilated area.



2 NEAR WINDOWS OR DOORS

Place it at least 20 feet away from windows and doors.



3 IN A GARAGE

Even if the door is up, never use a generator in a garage.



4 IN THE ELEMENTS

Run it on a dry surface under a canopy-like structure (but not in a carport).



5 PLUGGED INTO A WALL OUTLET

This can be deadly to you, family members, neighbors or utility workers.



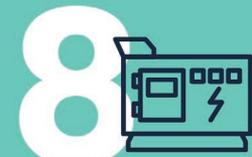
6 WITH THE WRONG EXTENSION CORD

Use a properly rated cord to plug appliances into a generator.



7 WITHOUT CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) TESTERS

CO detectors should be on every level of your home (test them monthly).



8 IN DISREPAIR

Make sure your generator is well-maintained and in good working order.



Teacher Totes

Meeting the needs of the communities we serve

The cooperative business model has a long history of building community from the ground up. Over 85 years ago, when utilities chose not to serve our rural area, farmers banded together to create your electric cooperative. While the main product ECE supplies is energy, it isn't our sole business purpose. We work to improve the quality of life for those we serve by donating time, energy, and resources to help our members. We also take a leadership role in community development projects.

To that end, we recently celebrated the sixth year of our Teacher Totes project, which supports area teachers by providing school supplies. Prompted by media reports about the perennial need for supplies in our school classrooms, Teacher Totes represents a collaborative effort by ECE employees from every department who work together to purchase and sort the supplies, then assemble and deliver to six districts within our service area. This year, recipients included Chisago Lakes, Foley, Mora, Princeton, Willow River, and Wrenshall.

As Desiree Cuda, who organizes the project, explains, "Once again, we partnered with CoBank through their Sharing Success program to deliver school supplies plus items like label makers, hand sanitizer, paper towels, and snacks. Teachers were so happy to see us! We received many smiles and heartfelt thanks from each school we visited."

Maintaining a thriving community is a team effort. You built us, and we'll continue working to serve you.



Princeton Intermediate School



Willow River Elementary School

Pictured left: Dozens of totes containing supplies await delivery to local schools.



Congratulations

Sandra Kapinos
Ogilvie, MN

Visit our website to learn more about Auto Pay.



The best way for ECE to provide safe and reliable electricity is to hire people with ambition and integrity. The diverse group of employees of ECE have graduated from technical schools, community colleges, state universities, and private colleges. As a result, your co-op values every type of education. And yes, that includes on-the-job experience because a four-year degree isn't necessarily right for everyone. To those who haven't yet found their passion, remember that continuous learning comes in many forms.

So, did little Justin want to be the CEO of an electric co-op when he grew up? Not exactly. Like most of you, my career has been a winding road and I've stopped at multiple rest stops along the way. To be frank, I owe my career to more than just a college degree. It comes down to parents, teachers, mentors, and previous employers, as well as books I've read and workshops I've attended. We're all a product of our experiences, which is why your co-op places such emphasis on supporting local communities.

At your service we remain,

When you think about your electric co-op, you probably visualize our lineworkers, who work in difficult situations to safely restore your power after a storm. However, there are many other jobs at ECE. While not "traditional" utility worker positions, all our employees help keep the lights on. For example, we have a strong team of mechanics (pictured below) that keep our trucks running in tip-top shape. Our finance team pays the bills and keeps us on track. The human resources team ensures that employee benefits are handled with accuracy, while folks in engineering design our distribution lines.

This is an exciting time to be involved in the energy industry. Emerging topics like renewable energy, electric vehicles, and an ever-evolving relationship with our members keeps us on our toes. At the same time, we're always learning new things. Careers in energy are rewarding and provide an engaging opportunity to serve the neighbors who rely on us.



ECE Fleet Team pictured L-R: Jim Schmidt, Holly Giffrow-Bos, Craig Hasser, Steve Rogers, Clint Krueger, and Luke Nuckols.



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Braham Service Center
Monday-Friday
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

1.800.254.7944

General business calls are answered from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Emergency and outage calls are answered 24 hours a day.

Email: info@ecemn.com

The ECE Board of Directors meets monthly. Please call Executive Assistant Wendy Leibel at 763-689-8046 to confirm meeting information. Monthly board meeting highlights and board operating policies can be found on SmartHub.

The Co-op Advantage newsletter is published by East Central Energy, your not-for-profit, member-owned, local electric cooperative.

ECE is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Website:
eastcentralenergy.com



Holiday office closings

November 25 and 26
December 24



Touchstone Energy Award

Nominate your community group for ECE's Touchstone Energy®
Community Award and a chance to win **\$2,000!**

Call 1-800-254-7944 or visit eastcentralenergy.com for details.



East Central Energy

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Nomination forms due October 18, 2021.

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