



March/April 2019

Co-op Advantage

Voting is more than your right—it's your power

Meet the candidates inside this issue!

As a member, your vote is your most powerful tool. What is important to you? How do you envision the future of the co-op? Your vote will help decide the direction of ECE.

This year, members in Districts 2 and 4 will elect their co-op leaders. The ECE Credentials and Election (C&E) committee met February 13 and approved Dan Daigle and incumbent David Deutschlander as District 2 candidates. Candidates approved by the C&E committee for District 4 include incumbent Garry Bye, Chris Daniels, and Donald Grossbach.

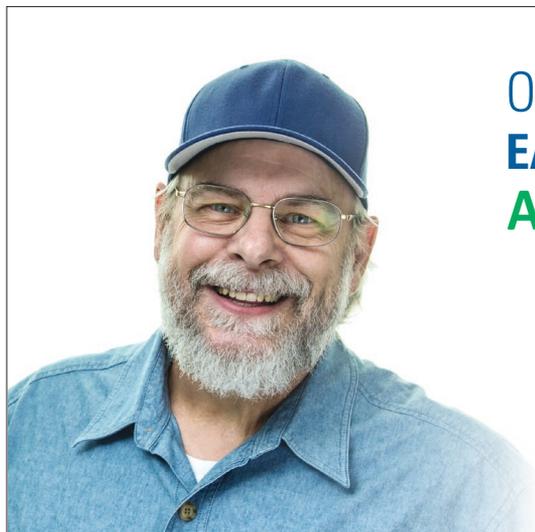
Because current director Linda Laitala was the only member nominated in District 5, she has been acclaimed the winner. No election will be held in District 5.

Please thoroughly read each candidate's profile inside this issue, and most importantly, vote!

Official ballots will be mailed the week of March 24, and the outcome of the election will be announced at the ECE Annual Meeting on April 11.

How secure is voting by mail or online?

ECE does not participate in the tabulation of ballots. Instead, we contract with Survey and Ballot Systems (SBS), a third-party election management provider. SBS provides election services with efficiency, security, and integrity.



Official notice EAST CENTRAL ENERGY ANNUAL MEETING April 11, 2019

TWO LOCATIONS

BRAHAM EVENT CENTER, 655 8th St. SW, Braham, MN 55006

ECE SUPERIOR OPERATIONS CENTER (via live video)
3617 E. Baumgartner Rd., Superior, WI 54880

Registration begins at 5 p.m. Business meeting at 6 p.m.
Light refreshments will be served.

JOIN US. SPEAK UP. BE HEARD.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Watt's Cookin'

Congratulations to Harriet Lidke, a member from Braham, MN, for winning the Watt's Cookin' slow cooker recipe contest. She will receive a \$25 energy credit for sharing her Mixed Berry Cobbler recipe.

MIXED BERRY COBBLER

- 1 16 oz. pkg. frozen mixed berries
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. sugar
- 2 T. quick-cooking tapioca
- 2 tsp. grated lemon peel
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. brown sugar, packed
- 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. nutmeg
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. butter, melted

First, mix frozen berries, sugar, lemon peel, and tapioca in slow cooker. Combine remaining ingredients in a bowl. Do not over mix. Drop by spoonfuls on top of berry mixture. Cover and cook four hours on low. Uncover and let set 30 minutes.

To enter our Watt's Cookin' contest, mail your favorite banana recipe to Watt's Cookin', P.O. Box 39, Braham, MN 55006. Entries must include your name, address, telephone number, ECE account number, and be received by April 19, 2019. The winning recipe and the contributor's name and city will be featured in a future edition of the Co-op Advantage. Recipes can also be emailed to info@ecemn.com.



We are increasing our communication efforts regarding utility scams. Every day, we work hard to warn members about scams, explain how they work, and offer tips on what people should and should not do.

Even the wariest consumers can be duped. The scammers are developing new tactics every day. One example is the "past due" scam, in which a member gets a call from an 800-number that looks like ECE's phone number (widely available spoofing software allows crooks to display what appears to be an official number on caller IDs). The caller threatens to cut off power if the customer doesn't pay.

But here's the giveaway: The crook will demand payment via a prepaid debit card or money order, and ask for it within a specified time frame—often an hour or less.

Tips to protect yourself:

- Do not assume your caller ID is correct; caller IDs can be spoofed.
- Never share your personal information, including birth date.
- Never wire money to someone you don't know.
- Do not click links or call numbers in unexpected emails or texts—especially those asking for your account information.

IMPORTANT

We will **NEVER** require our members to purchase prepaid debit cards or money orders to avoid an immediate disconnection. If you receive a call that sounds like a scam, hang up and call us to report the incident.

District 2 Board of Director candidates



Dan Daigle

What strengths would you bring to the cooperative's board of directors?

I am an open-minded person regarding new ideas or direction.

I strongly believe the increase in

production and distribution of electricity should be tied to a sense of fiscal responsibility. With my past business experience, I have the ability to work with everyone and achieve successful results.

What is the biggest challenge facing ECE in the coming years?

The biggest challenge we face is our ability to produce more electricity to meet the growing demand and to produce it using fewer resources. The ability to resolve this issue will be critical to growth, prosperity, and affordability.

Why do you want to serve as an ECE Director?

I am primarily interested in having input on the growth and costs associated with our co-op. I'm also very interested in any new technology that may become available to us that would change our ability to produce and distribute electricity.

Recent board/council experiences:

Pine City Planning Commission, Commissioner



David Deutschlander
Incumbent

What strengths would you bring to the cooperative's board of directors?

I've been married for 52 years with three children and five grand-

children. I've been a Pine County resident and part-time farmer for 42 years. I've owned a fencing business for 30 years, and was a lineman for 15 years with Northern States Power.

What is the biggest challenge facing ECE in the coming years?

Keeping our rates affordable and reliable with exceptional service. Hiring and keeping good employees. Keeping up with new technology in the electric industry.

Why do you want to serve as an ECE Director?

To keep the co-op supplying affordable energy, and to represent the members as best I can. To help determine the vision and mission of the co-op.

Recent board/council experiences:

Pokegama Town Board, Board Chair, 12 years
Pine County Fair Board, Member, 16 years
East Central Energy, Director

Serving all or part of the following areas: Arlone, Barry, Brook Park, Chengwatana, Clover, Crosby, Dell Grove, Hinckley, Kroschel, Mission Creek, Munch, Ogema, Pine City, Pokegama, Pomroy, Rock Creek, Royalton, and Sandstone.

Join us for Project GreenTouch

Saturday, May 4

9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

FATHER HENNEPIN STATE PARK - Isle, MN

The annual volunteer opportunity brings members, employees and friends together to spruce up one of Minnesota's most popular state parks.

Held rain or shine, all ages are welcome. Morning coffee and lunch provided. For details, visit our website or call Lynzie Kelly, 1-800-254-7944, ext. 2022.



Auto Pay WINNER

Visit our website to learn about Auto Pay. If you would like to be entered in the monthly drawing, sign up for Auto Pay today!

Members who currently participate in Auto Pay will automatically be entered in the drawing.

Congratulations
John Petrich, Sauk Rapids, MN

District 4 Board of Director candidates



Garry Bye - Incumbent

What strengths would you bring to the cooperative's board of directors?

Having worked over 42 years in the rural electric program, including 25 years as East Central Energy

President/CEO, along with nearly four years on the ECE Board, provides me with a broad background in the industry. Throughout the years, I have also served on numerous boards and commissions.

What is the biggest challenge facing ECE in the coming years?

Providing members with safe, reliable, affordable energy continues to be the primary challenge. Many important issues, such as aging infrastructure, efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, major structural changes, and opportunities within the electric utility and energy industry may also be on the horizon.

Why do you want to serve as an ECE Director?

My background and long-standing commitment to East Central Energy and its members provides me with history, knowledge and insight into the industry that can be helpful to ensure ECE's continued success. I have the interest, am in good health and want to be of service.

Recent board/council experiences:

East Central Energy, Director
Cambridge Airport Advisory Board, Member
Cambridge Lutheran Church Finance Committee, Member
Cambridge-Isanti Rotary Club, Member



Chris Daniels

What strengths would you bring to the cooperative's board of directors?

Retired Minnco Credit Union CFO with strong leadership experience and excellent communication

skills. Ability to work well in a team environment. Strong financial acumen with attention to detail. Ability to add value to the cooperative through sound decision making. CPA with 30-plus progressive years in accounting and finance industry.

What is the biggest challenge facing ECE in the coming years?

In the cooperative spirit, advocate for our communities and our members. Provide safe, reliable, consistent energy service at the lowest possible cost. To lead the charge with our ability to adapt to evolving industry innovation and technology. To make sure our policies are current with changing industry regulations.

Why do you want to serve as an ECE Director?

Serving allows me to give back to the community and advocate for its members in a tangible way. I believe my life experiences have purpose and have inspired me with an ability to lead, guide, and direct within a team environment and can benefit the company and the co-op members.

Recent board/council experiences:

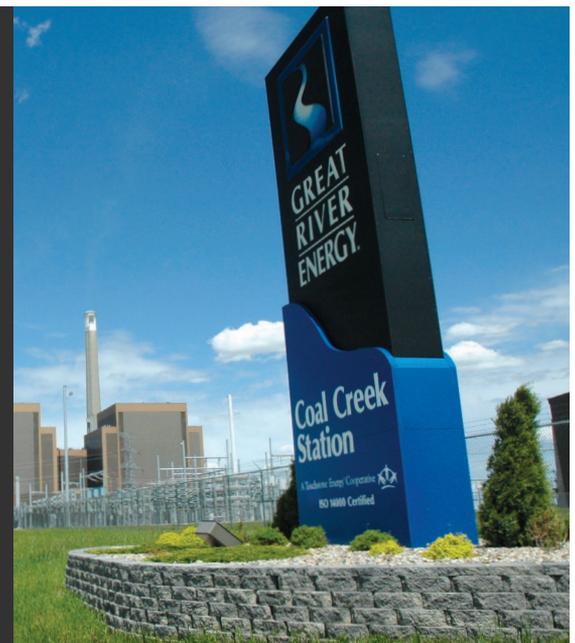
New Life Church, Secretary/Treasurer
MN Chief Financial Officers Council, Member
National Chief Financial Officers Council, Member
Minnco Credit Union Board, Participant

Join us on the Coal Creek Tour September 16-18, 2019

Travel to North Dakota where you will tour Coal Creek Station, the power plant that provides power to ECE and other Great River Energy cooperatives. You'll also visit the Falkirk Mine, which supplies the coal to power Coal Creek Station.

Cost for the tour is \$260 per couple, \$190 single. Price includes lodging, transportation, two lunches and one dinner.

Reservations are taken on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority to members who have never participated in the tour. For more information or to sign up, call Lynzie Kelly, 1-800-254-7944, ext. 2022.



District 4 Board of Director candidate



Donald Grossbach

What strengths would you bring to the cooperative's board of directors?

Through past employment, plus elected positions and volunteer experiences, I have acquired significant

board-level organization skills, like prioritizing options, long-range planning and the art of compromise. My undergraduate degree in economics education also taught evaluating financial statements and business projections, all desirable skills for board deliberations.

What is the biggest challenge facing ECE in the coming years?

We must continue to provide members with cost-effective energy while absorbing the expense to replace aging infrastructure and to build distribution networks for new residential and business customers. Encouraging incentives to conserve energy, combined with wise investments in associated companies, should assure a positive future for ECE.

Serving all or part of the following areas: Athens, Bogus Brook, Cambridge, Dalbo, Isanti, Maple Ridge, Princeton, Springvale, Stanchfield, and Wyanett.

Why do you want to serve as an ECE Director?

Being a Director for District 4 is an extension of my personal commitment to our community, like serving as a family physician in Braham. My father worked for Northern States Power Company for 43 years, responding to emergency power outages, so I hold all ECE employees in high regard.

Recent board/council experiences:

Braham School District 314, Board of Education
Braham Evangelical Lutheran Church, Church Council,
Past Congregation President
Allina Health System, Allina Medical Clinics Board of Directors
Braham Economic Development Authority, Charter Board Member
Purple Hawk Country Club, Board Member, Past President

District 5 acclaimed Director

This year in District 5, the only candidate nominated by petition was the incumbent, Linda Laitala, who was confirmed and acclaimed winner by the ECE Credentials and Election committee. Voting by ballot in this district will not be necessary this year.



Linda Laitala
Incumbent

What strengths would you bring to the cooperative's board of directors?

As a business owner who survived challenging economic times, I know

the value of planning. I am a listener and a leader. Experienced in strategic planning and meeting facilitation, I have a strong interest in technology. I am optimistic and excited about the future of ECE.

What is the biggest challenge facing ECE in the coming years?

Complying with regulations (environmental, reliability and security) while continuing to provide dependable, affordable electricity to the ECE member community.

Why do you want to serve as an ECE Director?

I have great respect for ECE. The organization represents everything good about cooperatives: care for consumers, involvement in community and focus on member satisfaction. I am, and would be, proud to serve as a Director on the East Central Energy Board.

Recent board/council experiences:

East Central Energy, Director
MN Business and Professional Women, Past President,
Current Website Director
MN Rural Electric Association, Secretary
DALA of Mora Business Women, Past President, Woman of the Year

Serving all or part of the following areas: Ann Lake, Arthur, Bradbury, Borgholm, Brunswick, Comfort, Dailey, East Side, Ford, Grass Lake, Haybrook, Hayland, Hillman, Idun, Isle Harbor, Jewette, Kanabec, Knife Lake, Lakin, Leigh, Lewis, Mount Morris, Mudgett, Page, Peace, Pliny, Seavey, South Fork, South Harbor, White Pine, Whited, and Williams.

Save now to save later with **ECE rebates**

With rebates on everything from appliances to ground source heat pumps, it's easy and cost-effective to make your home more energy efficient. Combined with our low off-peak rates, rebates make electric heating and cooling affordable as well. Our incentives, current rates, criteria and guidelines for residential members can be found on our website or by calling us.

ENERGY STAR

Refrigerator and freezer rebate: \$25
(with recycling of old unit)

ENERGY STAR

Wi-Fi-Enabled Thermostat rebate: \$25

Storage space heater rebate: \$100/kW

Storage space heating systems store heat during off-peak hours in specially designed electric thermal storage (ETS). Zero percent financing may be available through ECE.

Ductless air source heat pump rebate: \$300

Older homes that lack a central heating system can benefit from this heating and cooling unit.

Ground source heat pump rebate: \$400 per ton

A ground source heat pump uses the constant temperature of the earth to transfer heat to and from your home. It is a complete heating and cooling system.

Storage water heater rebate: \$500 per system

With storage water heating, a sufficient supply of water is heated during off-peak hours to meet your family's daily hot water needs. Zero percent financing may be available on storage water heaters purchased from ECE.

Coming soon!

STIHL® AK/AP series battery powered lawn care equipment

Watch our website in April for upcoming rebates up to \$200 on STIHL battery powered equipment such as hedge trimmers, chainsaws, and more!



Stay cool
with an
Air Source Heat Pump

For a limited time only!
Call or visit our website
for details.



Get more for your money with an air source heat pump. All your cooling and up to half your heat at ECE's special low rate.

Act now and get double or triple the rebate on an air source heat pump, plus you may qualify for ECE's zero-percent financing.

How does it work?

In the heating mode, air source heat pumps transfer heat from the outdoor air to the inside, reducing your reliance on propane, fuel oil or other fuel sources. When the outdoor temperature drops below a pre-set level, usually around 20-25°F, your primary heating system takes over.

In the cooling mode, your air source heat pump works like a standard central air conditioning system, transferring heat to the outside.

Change to Cycled Air program

The Cycled Air program has been closed to new applicants, and the bill credit will be reduced. Participants will see an \$8 bill credit on their June, July, and August statements. We regularly evaluate our energy efficiency programs to find the best ways to serve our members.



Dave Haggberg retires after 40 years of line work

Born and raised in Isle, MN, Dave Haggberg knew where he wanted to spend his life and his time. The outdoors has been his playground as far back as he can remember. When he had the opportunity to make it his workplace too, he jumped at the chance.

“I knew all the guys who worked for North Pine Electric back then,” said Dave. “I remember them being out on storm jobs. It intrigued me to see them out there working to get the power back on in that kind of weather.”

After graduating high school, Dave completed line worker school in Wadena and was hired by North Pine as an apprentice lineman at the Isle office in 1978. He’s been with his local electric co-op through many changes, including the merger with ECE in 1995 and the construction and move to the Wahkon building in 2001. He’s been a crew foreman since July 1993.

Dave reflected on his 40-year career as he prepared for his recent retirement. “It’s been excellent. The guys you get to work with, the equipment you’ve got, the work culture, it’s all really good.”

The job took him to every corner of ECE’s service territory at one time or another. “One of my favorite things about it was you weren’t at the same place every day. It wasn’t repetitive. You never knew for sure what the job would be.”

Helping co-ops in South Dakota recover from a major ice storm in 2010 stands out as a great

memory. “We spent two weeks out there putting 80 to 90 poles a day in the ground. People were stopping and offering to bring us anything we might need. The weather was beautiful. It was hard work but fun meeting and working with guys from a lot of other co-ops.”

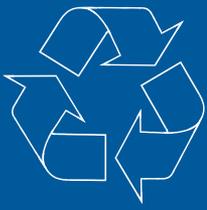
Dave said he’ll miss the storm recovery work but added, “Being on stand-by [on call] for 40 years, I won’t miss that.” Asked about changes that have made the work safer or more efficient, he cited bucket trucks that have more options, fire resistant clothing, and having iPads® to stay connected with dispatch in the field.

The Isle community is close to Dave’s heart, as demonstrated by his 38 years of service as a volunteer firefighter and 20 years as caretaker of the Faith Lutheran Cemetery. He and his wife, Susan, have a son, a daughter and five grandkids who all live nearby.

“My daughter and her husband live next door to us with their two girls. Our son and his wife are six miles away with three boys. We probably have at least three grandkids at our house at all times,” said Dave with a smile. “They keep us pretty busy.”

Short winter getaways to Arizona and an annual trip to the East Coast are in Dave’s retirement plans, but for the most part he’s happy to enjoy his family, his friends and the appeal of life in his hometown.





**Reduce
Reuse
Recycle**



East Central Energy
P.O. Box 39
Braham, MN 55006

Service Center locations:
Braham, Milaca, and Finlayson
Monday-Friday
Hours vary by service center.

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 Administrator Julie
Johnson at 763-689-8046 to
confirm meeting information.

The Co-op Advantage
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local electric cooperative.

ECE is an equal opportunity
provider and employer.

Website:
eastcentralenergy.com



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ENERGY MATTERS

with ECE President/CEO Steve Shurts

Benefits of electricity

As our generation mix moves toward renewable resources such as wind and solar energy, it only makes sense to electrify more end-use technologies. Replacing fossil fuels like propane, oil, and gasoline with electricity contributes to the goal of reducing both emissions and costs. We all benefit due to the economic and environmental advantages of electricity.

Take our existing off-peak programs for example. With electric storage water heating, water is heated in the overnight hours. The appliance shuts off during the day, when demand is highest. Programs like this encourage and reward household electrification.

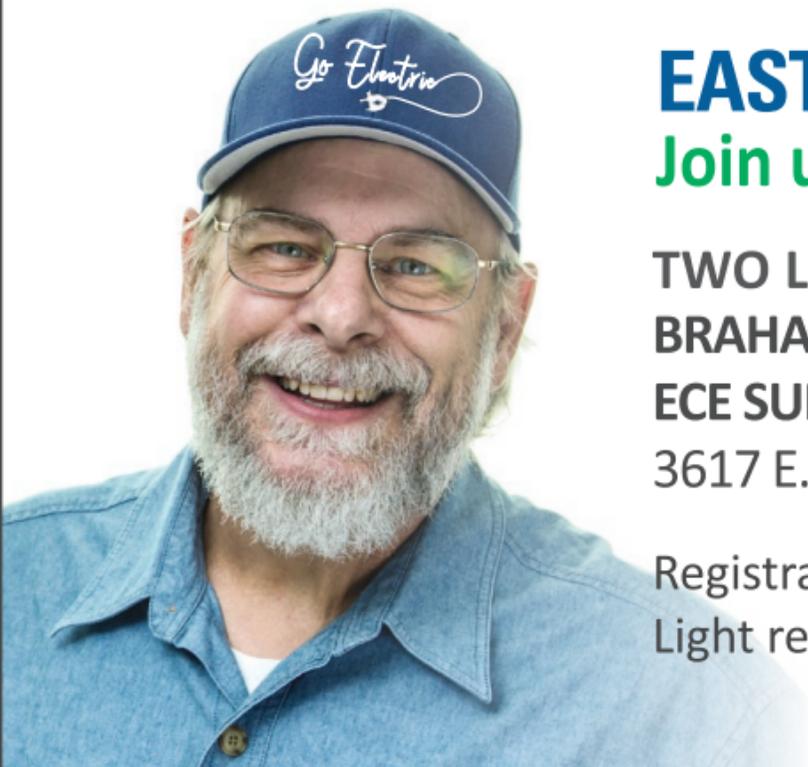
Another opportunity to benefit from electricity comes from air source heat pumps (ASHP). This technology reduces your overall heating and cooling costs when replacing a standard air conditioning unit. ASHPs are more economical and efficient than standard natural gas and propane heating appliances. Participating members benefit through a

technology that is best-in-class with a life-cycle cost that is lower than fossil fuels. Your cooperative benefits from sales during off-peak times.

But electrification is more than water and space heating. With the growth of electric vehicles (EVs), we can provide even greater opportunities to advance efficient and sustainable electrification. Even with gasoline prices hovering around \$2 a gallon, the “fuel” cost for EVs is substantially lower than the cost of gas.

Electrifying the technology of commercial and residential sectors is also advantageous. Forklifts, buses and fleet vehicles, grass trimmers and blowers, robotic milking and food service equipment are all electrification opportunities that are gaining traction with consumers. These tools are cleaner, quieter, and easier to operate and maintain than their gas and oil counterparts.

No matter what the technology, electrification is good for our economy, with the added benefit of being efficient and sustainable.



EAST CENTRAL ENERGY ANNUAL MEETING

Join us Thursday, April 11, 2019

TWO LOCATIONS

BRAHAM EVENT CENTER, 655 8th St. SW, Braham, MN 55006

ECE SUPERIOR OPERATIONS CENTER *(via live video)*

3617 E. Baumgartner Rd., Superior, WI 54880

Registration begins at 5 p.m. Business meeting at 6 p.m.

Light refreshments will be served. Call or visit website for details.

JOIN US. SPEAK UP. BE HEARD.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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eastcentralenergy.com

ECE is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Enhanced rebates
for a limited time only!
Visit eastcentralenergy.com
or call 1-800-254-7944 for details.

REBATES
UP TO
\$2,000

Stay cool *with an* Air Source Heat Pump

Act now and get double or triple the rebate on an air source heat pump, plus you may qualify for ECE's zero-percent financing.

REBATE AMOUNTS BASED ON SEER RATING

SEER rating	Regular Rebate	Promotional Rebate <i>(Available for a limited time)</i>
14.5 – 14.9	\$480	\$1,000
15.0 – 15.9	\$580	\$1,250
16 +	\$630	\$2,000

ECE is an equal opportunity provider and employer.