



People's Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Immediate NEWS RELEASE

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Melissa Griggs Awarded the Minnesota Cooperative Heroes Award

ORONOCO, MN, April 1, 2026 — Melissa Griggs, of Oronoco, Minnesota, has been recognized as a runner-up for the Minnesota Touchstone Energy Cooperative Heroes Award. Known for her remarkable contributions to her community, Griggs' dedication exemplifies the cooperative principle of "Concern for Community." People's Energy Cooperative recognized Griggs at their Annual Meeting on Thursday, March 26.

"Melissa Griggs truly embodies what it means to live out the cooperative principle of Concern for Community," said Gwen Stevens, President and CEO of People's Energy Cooperative. "Through unimaginable loss, she turned her grief into action that has saved lives and strengthened our community. We are proud to recognize Melissa for her leadership, compassion, and lasting impact on Oronoco and beyond."

Driven by resilience and compassion, Griggs became an advocate for change following personal tragedy – the loss of her three-year-old daughter, Hannah, due to carbon monoxide poisoning in 2004. Her advocacy inspired the passage of Hannah's Law in 2007, mandating life-saving carbon monoxide detectors in homes across Minnesota. Additionally, Melissa distributed over 400 detectors to homes in Oronoco, ensuring her neighbors were safer.

Griggs' care for her community extends beyond advocacy. In fall 2022, she assumed the role of chair for Downtown Oronoco Gold Rush Days. Through her leadership, this cherished annual event raises vital funds for nonprofits such as the fire department, VFW, food shelters, and Aging Oronoco. Her volunteer efforts also include organizing National Night Out events and supporting the VFW with marketing and social media management.

The Minnesota Touchstone Energy Cooperative Heroes Award honors individuals, like Griggs, who are making positive impacts within their communities. Sponsored by the Minnesota Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, this award celebrates exceptional volunteerism and community involvement. Griggs will receive \$500, which she has designated to go

toward Gold Rush Days. As one of the award winners, she stands as an inspiring example of cooperative values in action. The other runner up for the award was Peggy Stolley of Ely, recognized by Lake Country Power for her volunteer work. The first place prize went to Grace Grell of St. Cloud, for her work with the Ability Project.

Touchstone Energy cooperatives across Minnesota proudly celebrate individuals like Griggs, Grell, and Stolley who embody cooperative values, especially commitment to community.

About People's Energy Cooperative

People's Energy Cooperative is a member-owned electric cooperative celebrating nearly 90 years of delivering retail electric power to its 20,000 consumer-members in Olmsted, Dodge, Fillmore, Mower, Wabasha, and Winona Counties. People's Energy Cooperative is a Touchstone Energy® cooperative and a member-owner in the Dairyland Power system of electric cooperatives that generates and transmits reliable electric power in 62 counties of four states (Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois). People's is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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