



# ANNUAL REPORT

2023

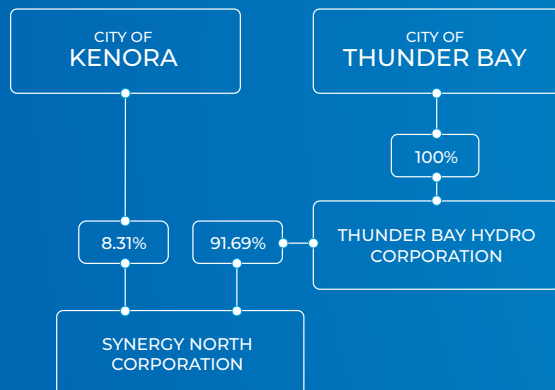
DELIVERING ON STRATEGY



# SYNERGY NORTH

SYNERGY NORTH is responsible for servicing electricity to the City of Kenora and the City of Thunder Bay. SYNERGY NORTH distributes electricity to over 56,000 customers via a network of over 1,400 kilometres of overhead and underground power lines between both service territories. It is the local, front-line customer service face of the province's electrical industry providing for the reading of customer meters, billing, and offering energy conservation advice and programs. We plan, build, and maintain the local power line system and provide 24-hour emergency response.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## MISSION

The mission of SYNERGY NORTH is to provide outstanding energy services in a safe, reliable and trusted manner to our communities in order to power people's lives.

## VISION

Your trusted partner for energy and related services.

## CORE VALUES



### EXCELLENCE

Pursue being better in everything we do



### SAFETY

Promote, work and live safety



### COMMUNITY

Lead by example to build a strong community



### RELIABLE

Supply our products and services in a trustworthy, fair and dependable manner

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

DELIVERING ON STRATEGY



## Contents

DELIVERING ON STRATEGY	4
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR	5
GOVERNANCE	6
LONG TERM CORPORATE GOALS	6
COST OF SERVICE	7
CUSTOMER SERVICE	10
ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL & GOVERNANCE	12
HUMAN RESOURCES	15
SAFETY	18
ASSET PLANNING & MANAGEMENT	19
STAKEHOLDERS & PARTNERSHIPS	22
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS	23





## DELIVERING ON STRATEGY

Embarking on the third year of our strategic journey, SYNERGY NORTH's annual report, highlights an unwavering commitment to progress through our strategic initiatives. Propelled by new capabilities, a performance culture, and effective operational methods, we've successfully bridged the gap from strategy to delivery. With a commendable track record, we've not only met key initiatives but also advanced our vision, fulfilling our mission, and addressing the dynamic needs of the evolving energy landscape. As we continue to purposefully work towards our strategic direction, the focus on long-term corporate goals ensures steady progress.



*Tim Wilson, MBA Energy  
President & CEO*

*Gary Armstrong, FCPA, FCMA  
Board Chair*

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR

As we reflect on the past year at SYNERGY NORTH, we are proud to share the significant strides we've made in delivering on our strategic goals and commitments to our communities, while embracing innovation and sustainability. Our dedication to excellence, safety, reliability, and community engagement has been the cornerstone of our success. Every plan, every action and every decision were aligned with our purpose which is to power people's lives.

SYNERGY NORTH has prioritized investments in our infrastructure, adding substantial value to our net assets. Our completion of the five-year Distribution System Plan has seen remarkable upgrades, enhancing the reliability and efficiency of our power distribution network. Aligning our fleet plan with the Distribution System Plan has also further optimized our operations while reducing expenses ensuring seamless service delivery to our customers. Meanwhile, we have started to implement the first steps of our Vegetation Management Plan, eliminating any immediate hazards posed by vegetation. This is essential for the safety of our customers and team, and supports system reliability and outage management.

Financial responsibility was a vital focus over the past two years, as our team diligently prepared the Cost of Service application for distribution rates. This meticulous process determines our investments, aligns with our commitment to delivering value to our customers, and underscores our dedication to transparency and accountability. We are proud of the rate application and the work our team put forward to make it such a successful outcome for our customers and shareholders.

Over the coming years, as the energy landscape continues to change rapidly around us, it's clear that change is not only constant but accelerating and utility customers have expectations from their energy provider.

We will meet these expectations and more. There is a great electrification ahead of us and whether it is transportation or with heating we will be ready. SYNERGY NORTH is committed to respond effectively to meet the evolving energy requirements of the future.

At SYNERGY NORTH, we continue to understand the importance of being an integral part of the communities we serve. Through our Connections Committee and corporate giving initiatives, we have strengthened our community ties and made a positive impact on the lives of our customers. Our contributions to various non-profit organizations in Thunder Bay and Kenora underscore our commitment to supporting local initiatives and building a stronger community together. Volunteering in our communities gives us all that opportunity to experience giving back firsthand and has been incredibly rewarding for staff. Being actively involved not only strengthens our connection, but reminds us all of the importance of supporting the people and organizations that make Kenora and Thunder Bay home.

As we look to the future, we remain focused on our mission to provide outstanding energy services in a safe, reliable, and trusted capacity. Our strategic focus on innovation, sustainability, and customer-centric solutions will continue to guide us as we navigate the evolving energy landscape and empower our communities.

While our assets are critical to our system, it's our dedicated and skilled people that are the centre of our operations. We want to express gratitude to our dedicated team whose hard work and commitment have been instrumental in our success. Together, we will continue to deliver on our strategy, set clear plans, and execute with excellence, ensuring a brighter, more sustainable future for all.

# GOVERNANCE

## Board of Directors

**Gary Armstrong, FCPA, FCMA<sup>1,2</sup>**  
Board Chair

**Mark Bentz<sup>1</sup>**  
Director

**Denise Carpenter, ICD.D<sup>\*2</sup>**  
Director

**Barb Eccles, HBSc, JD, LLM, ICD.D<sup>1</sup>**  
Director

**John McDougall<sup>\*1</sup>**  
Director & Chair, Governance Committee

**Jonathan Webber, MBA, CPA, CPHR, ICD.D<sup>\*2</sup>**  
Director & Chair, Audit Committee

**Murray Walberg, MBA, ICD.D<sup>\*1</sup>**  
Director

**Ash Sahi, MBA, C.Dir<sup>\*2</sup>**  
Director

\*Independent Directors  
1 Governance Committee Member  
2 Audit Committee Member

## Executive Management Team

**Tim Wilson, MBA Energy**  
President & Chief Executive Officer

**Andy Armitage, MBA**  
Vice President, Customer Care, IT & Strategic Planning

**Karla Bailey, P.Eng, MBA**  
Vice President, System Planning, Asset Management & Engineering

**Aaron Blazina, CPA, CA**  
Vice President, Finance, Regulatory Affairs & Purchasing

**Andrew Covello, CHRL, CHRE**  
Vice President, Human Resources, Safety & Corporate Risk/Chief Privacy Officer

**Garrett Moulard**  
Vice President, Lines & Operations

# LONG TERM CORPORATE GOALS

**Promote, work and live safely achieving positive health and safety outcomes for employees and the public.**

The potential danger associated with the product we work with everyday cannot be overstated. It is critical that the utility's primary focus remain on the safety of our staff and the public.

**Pursue being better in everything we do resulting in increased shareholder and customer value.**

SYNERGY NORTH Corporation is a valuable asset, owned by the City of Thunder Bay and the City of Kenora. The owners have the right to expect that the value of this asset will increase. The Board and Management of the utility must make this growth a priority.

**Supply electricity and related services in a trustworthy, fair and dependable manner supporting our customers in achieving their goals.**

The provision of electricity to the residents and businesses in Thunder Bay, Kenora and the Fort William First Nation is our reason for existence and is critical to the economy and the quality of life of residents throughout our service territories.

**Lead where we live and operate as an integral part of the community.**

Notwithstanding that SYNERGY NORTH Corporation is a business, we strive to be part of the fabric of the communities we serve, supporting local events, assisting with local initiatives and being present where needed and called upon.



## COST OF SERVICE

Over the past two years, the SYNERGY NORTH team has been busy preparing the Cost of Service (COS) application for distribution rates. The COS determines the level of spending and investments that SYNERGY NORTH will make, including equipment, infrastructure, maintenance, rates customers pay and more. All costs had to be presented and justified before being reviewed by the Ontario Energy Board (OEB).

- **January 2022:**  
Introductory training session for all staff involved in the preparation  
Bi-weekly meeting updates with EMT
- **Summer 2022:**  
Preparation of 2023 budget
- **Fall 2022:**  
Preparation of 2024 budget
- **November 2022:**  
Board approval of 2023 budget
- **January 2023:**  
Board approval of 2024 budget
- **December 2022 – June 2023:**  
Preparation of the 2024 Cost of Service Application
- **August 2023:**  
COS filed two weeks early
- **September 1st-October 20th, 2023:**  
COS application review by the OEB and Intervenor
- **October 20th-November 10th, 2023:**  
SNC completed response to questions posed by OEB and Intervenor
- **November 20th – November 21st:**  
Settlement conference held
- **December 21st, 2023:**  
Full settlement proposal filed with the OEB
- **March 28, 2024:**  
Decision and Order for rates received from OEB

The recent cost of service approval will have Synergy North Corporation investing, on average, \$12.4 million per year on rebuilding the distribution system. This will include replacing end-of-life infrastructure on an annual basis, of approximately 357 wood poles, 194 transformers, 31 kilometres of overhead line, and 6 kilometres of underground line.

SYNERGY NORTH has significantly expanded its rate base since 2017, through the construction of capital assets. Starting at \$119,888,205, our rate base has grown to \$159,534,024 in 2024, marking a 33% increase. This growth underscores our dedication to building essential infrastructure and delivering value to our shareholders.



# 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

---



**\$1,465,948**

**in facilitated financial  
assistance to customers**



**\$43,387**

**in community donations**

**93%**  
**overall  
customer  
satisfaction**



**additional 70**  
**employee volunteer  
hours than 2022**



**customer accounts**  
**2,366**  
**new**



**4,073**

**customer account moves/closures**



**30+**

**customers enrolled  
in Business Energy  
Advocate Program**



# Zero Incidents

As of December 31, 2023  
SYNERGY NORTH achieved 575  
days without a lost time injury

# 27 87%

Safety Training Sessions  
attended by Employees

of employees believe  
Safety is a Top Priority



of employees  
would recommend  
SYNERGY NORTH as  
a great place to work

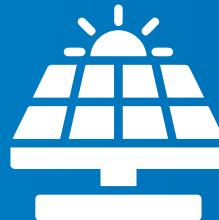
# 19

employees on 35  
different industry  
groups and  
committees



# \$12.3M

in construction of capital  
projects on infrastructure  
to support distribution  
and reliability



# 880

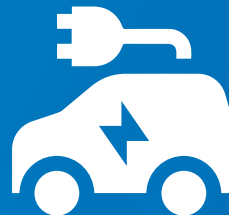
homes powered  
by renewable  
assets to date



Vegetation Management:

# 297 km

trimmed



Fleet Plan  
created with EV  
fleet included



All 4kV lines removed from service



## OUR CUSTOMERS

51,224



RESIDENTIAL

5,582



SMALL  
BUSINESS

507



COMMERCIAL/  
INDUSTRIAL

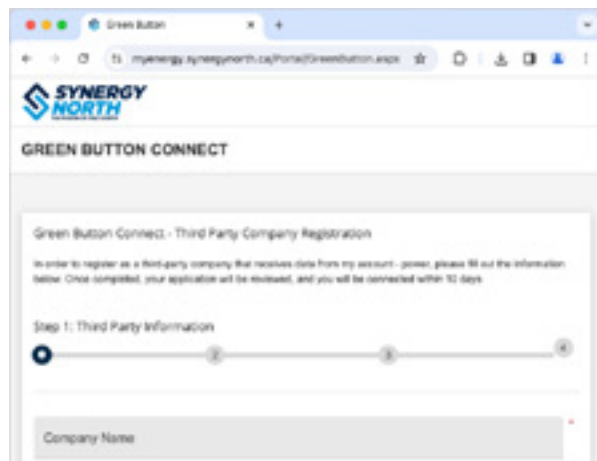
Overall  
Customer  
Satisfaction



93% Residential  
90% Business

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

### Introduction Of Green Button and Enhanced Customer Portal



In 2023, SYNERGY NORTH successfully integrated Green Button. The online tool provides easy access to energy data and can help customers make informed decisions and achieve energy savings. Using the technology, customers can download information about their energy usage from SYNERGY NORTH in a user friendly format and then authorize the secure transfer of this data to applications of their choice. Ontario is the first province in Canada to mandate the standard.

Green Button compliments SYNERGY NORTH's enhanced customer portal. New options integrated over the past year for the MyEnergy portal, support customers to understand their energy usage including a Rate Calculator that explores pricing plan options and provides a Time-of-Use (TOU) vs. Tiered pricing comparison. With easy-to-read charts, customers can compare power usage hourly, daily, monthly or annually.

In May of 2023, SYNERGY NORTH also introduced the **Ultra-Low Overnight Rate** for residential and small business customers. Customers that use more electricity at night, including shift workers and those that electrically heat their home or charge their electric vehicle, could save on their bills annually by shifting demand to the ultra-low overnight rate period when province-wide electricity demand is lower.

The **Ultra-Low Overnight Rate**, set by the Ontario Energy Board, is 2.8 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh), which is lower than the current off-peak rate, in exchange for a higher on-peak rate.

 **99.5%**  
bill accuracy

 **19,167**  
E-billing customers enrolled

 **52,229**  
customers on time-of-use pricing

 **3,998**  
customers on tiered pricing

 **4,073**  
customer account moves/closures

**116**   
ultra-Low overnight pricing

 **89.7%**  
calls answered in under 30 seconds



## ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL & GOVERNANCE

### Connections Committee Update

2023 was a year marked by the growing and meaningful impact of the Connections Committee. Embarking on its first full year in operation, the committee witnessed a remarkable surge of 70 additional employee volunteer hours, demonstrating its commitment to community service. The committee also saw an increase in corporate giving compared to 2022.

With the committee focusing on a more staff centred approach to employee and family events, it experienced a notable uptick in cross-corporation socialization. This has been beneficial in fostering a tighter-knit and more cohesive workplace environment. The committee's efforts have contributed to enhancing company culture, and demonstrating a collective dedication to making a positive difference both within and beyond SYNERGY NORTH walls.

### Community Contributions

**At SYNERGY NORTH we care about our communities, and we seek partnerships with local groups that will strengthen and make a difference in people's lives.**

**In 2023, SYNERGY NORTH donated **\$43,387** to various non-profit organizations and initiatives to support the Thunder Bay and Kenora communities.**



*In March and May of 2023, SYNERGY NORTH staff generously volunteered their time at Shelter House. On each occasion, two groups of volunteers worked to prepare meals and serve lunch to those in need. Our team prepared a menu that included a spaghetti lunch and Chicken souvlaki pitas with tzatziki and salad. Approximately 150 patrons were served making a meaningful impact.*

# **10** sponsored community/charity events



*Staff volunteered at Hike for Hospice.*



*A Summer family event also took place at Thunder City Speedway on August 16, 2023. Staff and their families had the opportunity to take in special seating and a complimentary BBQ.*



*In June 2023 there was a family event at the Boys and Girls Club.*



*A SYNERGY NORTH team participated in the District of Thunder Bay Children's Aid Society Quiz Night.*



*Hike for Hospice.*



*District of Thunder Bay Children's Aid Society Quiz Night.*

## Employee led donations were made to the following organizations:

- ▶ Camp Quality
- ▶ Canadian Mental Health Association Kenora Branch
- ▶ Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay
- ▶ Festival of Colours
- ▶ George Jeffrey Children's Foundation
- ▶ Kenora District Services Board
- ▶ Kenora Public Library
- ▶ Lakehead Festival of Arts
- ▶ Lakehead Regional Conservation Authority
- ▶ March of Dimes
- ▶ Options Northwest
- ▶ Regional Food Distribution Association
- ▶ Shelter House Thunder Bay
- ▶ St. Joseph's Care Group Secret Santa Project
- ▶ Triple PLAY
- ▶ Threads of Life

Renewable Environmental Footprint

Since 2013, SYNERGY NORTH has been operating and maintaining solar generation projects. Our solar energy operation has six solar rooftops with over 3, 000 panels that combine for 685 kilowatts of power. They assist several local businesses in generating a renewable energy source with a greater positive impact on our environment. SYNERGY NORTH solar renewable energy projects include:



► Superior North EMS



► Thunder Bay Transit



► Port Arthur Arena



► Tbaytel Work Centre



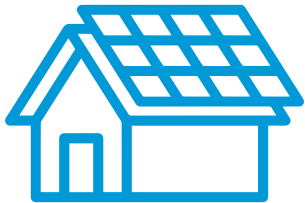
► Mountdale Maintenance Garage



► Victoriaville Parkade

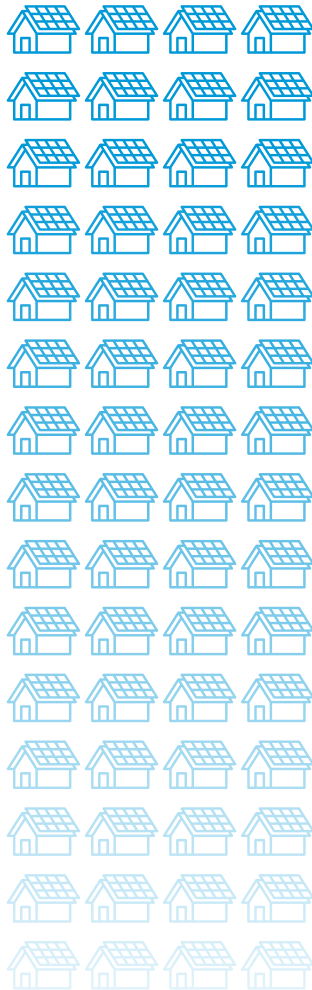
Powering Results

The Solar Energy operations reduced SYNERGY NORTH's environmental footprint by decreasing CO2 emissions and generating renewable energy for local homes and business owners. Over its lifespan the Solar Energy operations has prevented over 5,053 tonnes of methane from entering the atmosphere and created enough renewable energy to power 880 local homes with electricity for a year.



880

homes powered  
by renewable  
energy to date  
(until December 31, 2023)





## HUMAN RESOURCES

 **119**  
employees

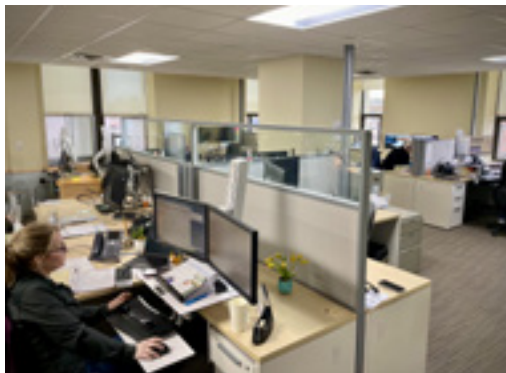
**19**   
new hires

**5**   
retirees

### Transformative Office Relocation

In a strategic move towards a more sustainable and efficient future, SYNERGY NORTH had a transformative relocation of its office space. Staff and departments moved from several floors of the Whalen Building and all amalgamated on the fourth floor. The new space reflects a reassessment of the company's needs, blending traditional workspaces with modern, flexible, and collaborative areas.

One of the key decisions in this transformation was scaling back on square footage, a move that not only reduces the environmental footprint but also brings about significant cost savings. This shift aligns with a growing trend where corporations recognize the importance of creating spaces that are both environmentally conscious and economically efficient. The design of the new office space is centred around creating inviting and comfortable employee environments. A well-designed space also serves as a crucial recruiting tool.



**SYNERGY NORTH occupied 19654.30 square feet in the Whalen Building from 2008-2023.**





## Electricity Distributors Association (EDA) Awards Gala

### Volunteer Excellence Award: Karla Bailey, Vice President of Asset Management

The EDA Awards Gala was held in March of 2023. This yearly event shines a spotlight on remarkable achievements, top-notch customer service, eco-friendly initiatives, innovations, and best practices by hydro utilities throughout Ontario. SYNERGY NORTH's Karla Bailey, Vice President of Asset Management, was honoured with the EDA's Volunteer Excellence Award this year. Recognized for her exceptional dedication and unwavering support in advancing the Association's policy positions, Karla actively serves as the Vice-Chair of the EDA's Operations and Engineering Council and has been a valuable member of the Electrification Council since 2013.

## Wellness Committee

The Wellness Committee was established in January with a mission to promote employee wellbeing and prevent psychological injury within the workplace. Led by a dedicated group of volunteers, their role extends beyond communication; they actively engage, motivate and provide support for worksite wellness. In the past year, committee members have transformed into wellness champions, making a positive impact on the lives of staff and their families. Through the committee, employees now have easy access to programs to support healthy lifestyle choices.

**Mental Health First Aid Training:** In the first quarter, committee members honed crucial skills to navigate mental health challenges.

**Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP):** Multiple information sessions were held providing information on the EFAP provided through the Behavioural Sciences Centre.

**Capital Financial Services:** Benefit information sessions were held to deliver awareness on the resources and services available through My Benefits and Teladoc Health. Synergy North Corporation benefits now support virtual healthcare with a supporting team that delivers services virtually to employees and their dependents from the convenience of their own home.

**Intranet Connections Resource Page:** A resource page has been created within Intranet Connections under the Wellness tab, listing several local resources and links, offering quick access to vital information within the community.

The Wellness Committee also identified that mental health resources are difficult to access due to high demand and wait times for appointments. Recognizing this challenge, SYNERGY NORTH's executive management team acted on the committee's recommendations to broaden access to mental health professionals, enhancing the employee benefits package.

**Fall Wellness Event 2023:** Highlighting the importance of laughter and balance in life, the Wellness Committee, in collaboration with the Committed to Safety Committee, curated a memorable workshop titled Balancing Life with Humour. Presented by Kate Davis, a renowned comedian and speaker, the event aimed to underscore the significance of employee health and wellbeing, inspiring employees to reach their fullest potential.

## The Great Canadian Electricity Map

Canada's Interactive Gymnasium Maps Spark Interest & Recruitment in Energy Careers



A GIANT initiative is transforming school gymnasiums across Canada into interactive learning hubs. The Great Canadian Electricity Map spearheaded by Electricity Human Resources Canada in collaboration with Canadian Geographic Education, aims to inspire youth to explore careers in the clean energy industry.

At the heart of the initiative is a colossal 11-metre by 8-metre floor map that spans the entirety of a school gymnasium. The map not only showcases the geographical landscape of Canada but also serves as an informational canvas, shedding light on the diverse and innovative careers within the electricity and renewable energy sectors. It features over 70 unique career profiles in the electricity and renewable energy fields, which includes three employees at SYNERGY NORTH.

To bring these careers to life, each section of the map features QR codes, enabling students to seamlessly engage with short video clips that provide an in-depth look into the day-to-day lives of professionals in the industry. Equipped with a smartphone, children can walk over the map, scanning the codes that spark a virtual journey into the world of energy careers.



### Technological Mastermind

*"So in a power outage, rather than driving out into the field to sort out what the problem is, we're now able to talk to these devices from the office. Having them remote operable is the future."*

- Salvatore Carello - Power Protection and Control Technologist



### Regulatory Guru

*"I love working with numbers, problem solving. I really enjoy my coworkers, we've worked together for many years. If you really like to work in accounting and really like a financial background, this is definitely the position for you."*

- Jillian Hanstead - Regulatory Assurance Specialist



### Electric Vehicle Enthusiast

*"We're on the cusp of all these really cool innovative technologies, like renewable energy, electric vehicles- how are we going to get those electric vehicles plugged into the grid. That stuff really gets young people excited about what it might be like, what they could do and how they could shape the world."*

- Karla Bailey - Vice President of Engineering



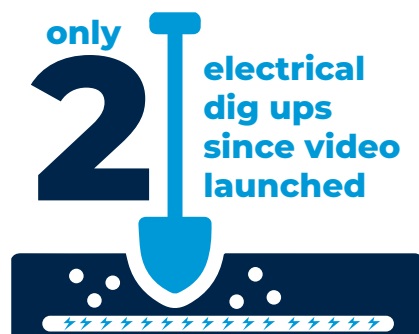
## SAFETY

### Safety Video Public Relations Campaigns

SYNERGY NORTH is always looking for new ways to connect with customers to ensure their safety. To reach a larger audience and be more relatable, captivating video features were created in 2023 with a focus on Digging Safely, Powering People's Lives and the Hit the Brakes campaign.

One of the identified key areas of focus for the utility's 2023 Public Safety Strategy was the likelihood of people to call before they dig. SYNERGY NORTH was seeking impactful ways to share the "Call or Click Before You Dig" message with homeowners and contractors, and empower them to be responsible for their own safety. Additionally, the team wanted to take that message one step further and educate the digging public that digging safely is even MORE than a call or click, and there are further responsibilities after the initial request.

The "Digging Safely is More than Just a Call or Click" video isn't your run-of-the-mill safety initiative—with a compelling storyline and guidance of the ever-vigilant neighbour, Jerry, SYNERGY NORTH crafted a narrative that not only grabs attention but ignites a sense of empowerment.



### MEET: JERRY

*Your friendly neighbour that is obsessed with safety*



- ▶ Safety employee of the year (on several occasions)
- ▶ Wants everyone to know the rules about digging
- ▶ Gets worked up about safety stuff

*"Transforming this safety message into a video makes it relatable for the audience, easy to understand and enhances retention. As a short, informative and entertaining video, it swiftly catches viewers' interest. Neighbour Jerry doesn't just capture attention; he commands it, ensuring a lasting impression on our audience."*

Amy Kembel - Manager, Human Resources & Safety  
SYNERGY NORTH

## ASSET PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

**SERVICE AREA**  
**441** ( Square km)

**7,673**  
Transformers

**22,805**  
Poles

**256** (km)  
Underground  
Powerlines

**910** (km)  
Overhead  
Powerlines

**280**  
Vault  
Transformers

**2519**  
Pad Mount  
Transformers

**4900**  
Pole Mount  
Transformers

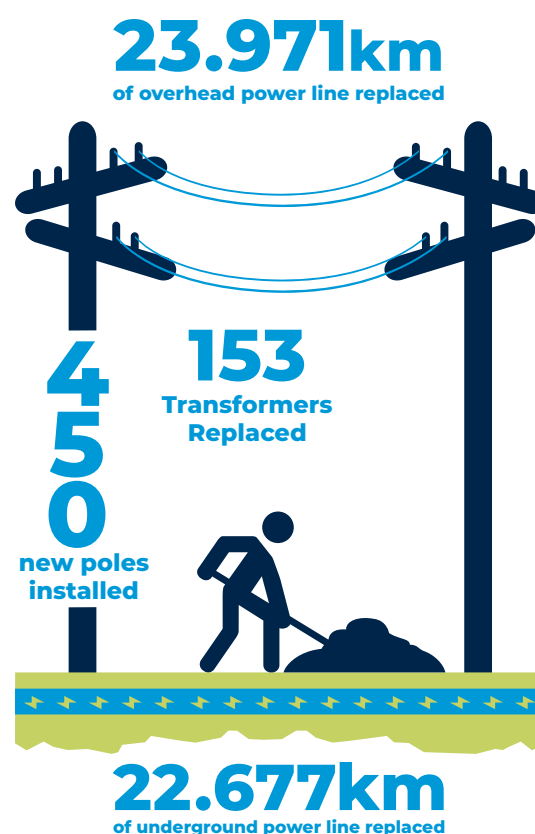
**19**  
Station  
Transformers

### Capital Construction

**\$12.378M** Capital  
Renewal

System upgrades took place in the following neighbourhoods in 2023:

PROJECT	BUDGETED SPEND	ACTUAL EXPENDITURES
University/ Sherbrooke: Full Project	\$949,891	\$789,605
Edward/ Ironwood: Framing & Stringing	\$636,153	\$667,458
Donald/ Vickers: 4kV Conversion Pole Set	\$731,607	\$764,807
Valley/ Skyline: Framing & Stringing	\$1,024,382	\$991,057
College/ Tupper: 4kV Conversion, Framing & Stringing	\$1,678,497	\$1,681,025
Court/ Wilson: 4kV Conversion, Pole-Set	\$1,106,874	\$909,154

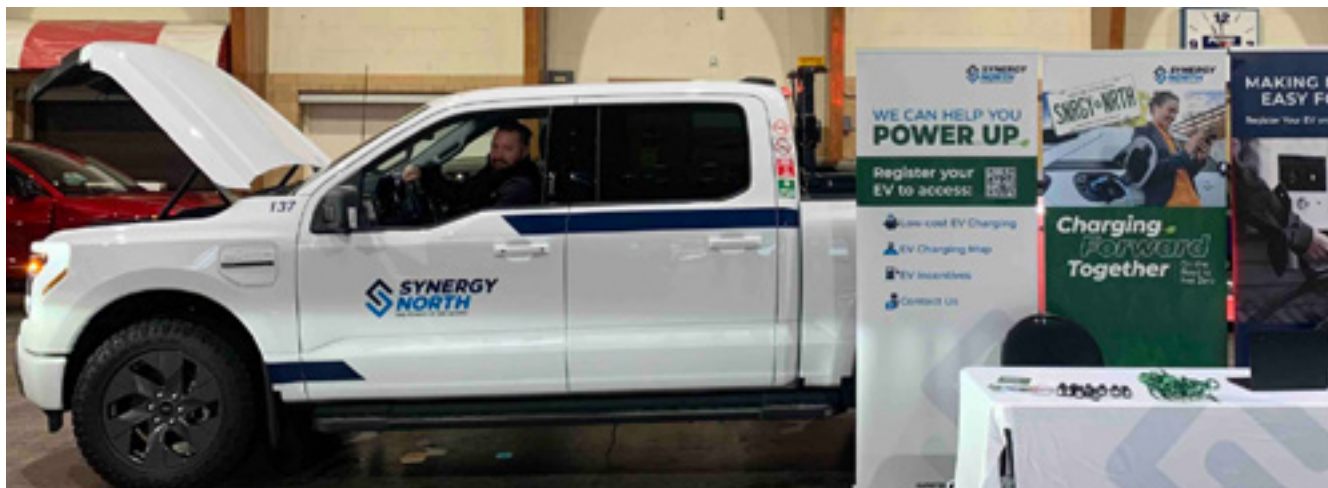


### Operational Performance

In 2023, our overall SAIDI (System Average Interruption Duration Index) average was 1.154. SAIDI indicates the average amount of time a customer would expect their power to be interrupted in a calendar year. Our overall SAIFI (System Average Interruption Frequency Index) average for 2023 was 1.7254. SAIFI indicates how often the average customer experiences an interruption in a calendar year.

*“With an understanding that most people charge their electric vehicles at home, Synergy North is keen on building an EV community that serves as a learning ground for both the company and its customers to identify and address their needs effectively.”*

*Andy Armitage - Vice President, Customer & Information Services  
SYNERGY NORTH*



## Synergy North's Drive Towards an EV Future and Community-Powered Energy Solutions

With a desire to bridge the gap between energy services and the electric vehicle landscape, SYNERGY NORTH partnered with the Electric Vehicle Association of Northern Ontario (AVANO), to host a trade show in Thunder Bay this past fall. The event served as a platform for the utility to foster engagement and dialogue with customers who own electric vehicles.

At the trade show, the SYNERGY NORTH team encouraged attendees to register their electric vehicles with the utility, with the incentive of an online community portal. The initiative focused on gaining insights from those who own electric vehicles, recognizing customers as valuable partners in the quest to better comprehend and serve the evolving energy landscape. By gathering information about the electric vehicles connected to the grid, SYNERGY NORTH gains data into the power draw and potential usage patterns, contributing to a clearer understanding of the grid's load dynamics and what's expected for the future.

## Driving Innovation

SYNERGY NORTH continues to drive innovation with the latest addition to its fleet—the Ford Lightning. Also showcased at the EVANO Trade Show, this powerhouse isn't just for operations and maintenance; as the first electric vehicle for the utility, it embarks on the transition to a cleaner energy future, and signals a tech-forward vision.

## EV Registration

The utility's decision to embark on the EV journey signifies a strategic effort to better align with customer needs alongside evolving technologies. SYNERGY NORTH continues to work on the development of an innovative online portal designed to harmonize the transition to electric vehicles for its customers. With a simple registration process, users gain access to a realm of benefits including an EV Charging Map, EV incentives, the latest news and technological advancements, along with expert support provided in load management, charging equipment and cost-saving options.

SYNERGY NORTH has also partnered with local automotive dealerships, integrating marketing materials into the dashboard of newly sold electric vehicles, encouraging buyers to register with the utility.





## Vegetation Management Program

SYNERGY NORTH's Vegetation Management Program aims to reduce the risk posed by fallen trees and branches, to help support the safe operation of our network and minimizing outages. Maintenance teams regularly remove vegetation that is growing too close to the lines.

The Vegetation Management Plan will continue to spend approximately \$2 Million per year for the next five years to remove all vegetation within 3 metres of all primary overhead lines. In total, there are 906 kilometres of overhead line that need to be cleared in Thunder Bay.



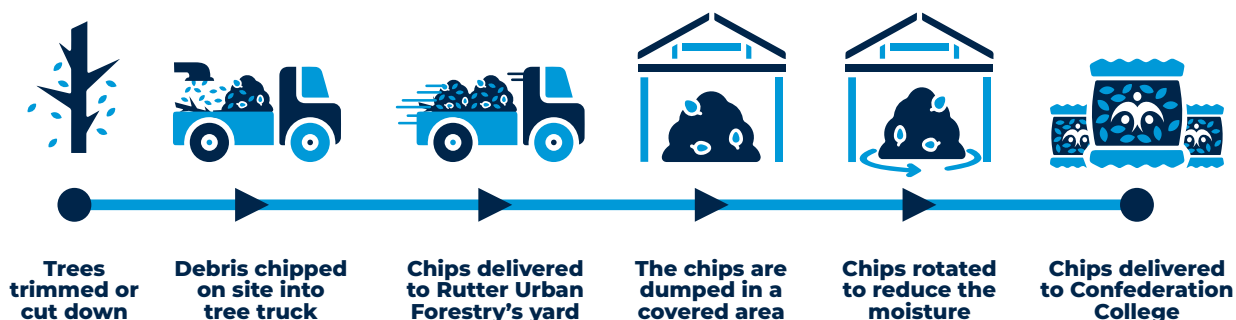
### Proactive Approach to Safety and Outage Management:

- ▶ Minimizes infrastructure safety concerns
- ▶ Reliability and service continuity
- ▶ Environmental stewardship
- ▶ Cost-efficiency



## Synergy North Turns Wood Waste Into Winter Heat

SYNERGY NORTH collaborated with Confederation College this year to usher in a new sustainable heat source for the Thunder Bay campus. With the utility trimming and removing several trees annually, the woody debris that is chipped on site, made for the perfect option and solution for the college's boilers. A new chip feed system was commissioned at the site to enable the boilers to be utilized full time. The biomass boilers are set to start up whenever the temperature drops below five degrees, which is typically between the months of September and April of each year.



## STAKEHOLDERS & PARTNERSHIPS

### Business Energy Advocate Program

SYNERGY NORTH is committed to finding new ways to help reduce energy costs for local businesses. The Business Energy Advocate Program offers a variety of solutions on billing and rate education, energy usage, and available programs that can support business owners. In 2023, SYNERGY NORTH teamed up with the IESO and met with local customers to better understand individual needs and how best to serve them.

*Over 30 customers enrolled into the BEAP program in 2023.*

In the pursuit of energy efficiency and sustainability, companies often face challenges and opportunities that can significantly impact their operations and bottom line. Keen on improving energy consumption practises, and a lack of familiarity with energy data, the BEAP program helps identify ways to improve energy consumption. This also includes information on accessing provincial incentives available for equipment upgrades and efficiency projects.

Avalon contacted SYNERGY NORTH with a need to better understand and optimize its energy usage.

*"I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Synergy North for taking the time with Avalon as a new customer and supporting us on high energy usage discovery and setting up improvements to lowering our overall power consumptions and billing cost. The approach was friendly with a real willingness to support our initiatives."*

*Rickardo Welyhorsky  
Avalon Vice President  
Operations and Chief Operating Officer*

## 2023 Parade of Lights

SYNERGY NORTH had a fleet of bucket trucks decked out for the 24th annual Parade of Lights. Three SYNERGY NORTH families drove the route powering up the holidays! Thank you to Gary Clavet, Mitch Clavet, Lorin Curiston and Kurtis Jung for participating.

Every year the initiative raises thousands of dollars in support of local children and youth charities in Thunder Bay. \$44,138 was donated to the George Jeffrey Children's Foundation, the Thunder Bay chapter of Special Olympics Ontario, Autism Ontario, and the Thunder Bay Therapeutic Riding Association.



## Sandbox Challenge

SYNERGY NORTH was proud to collaborate on two projects that secured significant funding from the Ontario Energy Board via the Sandbox Challenge. Alectra Utilities Corp. received \$325,000 to explore residential engagement in demand response events, while Powerconsumer Inc. was awarded \$400,000 to scale flexibility markets, encouraging customer participation in modifying electricity usage patterns.

At the start of 2023, the OEB invited project submissions focusing on two themes based on public input. The Challenge: how to move pilots to broader implementation and innovative strategies to enhance customers' understanding of their role in the energy transition, a global shift towards a more sustainable, renewable energy future.

SYNERGY NORTH continues to play a vital role in these two projects, working alongside our partners to support innovation aimed at shaping the future of energy in our communities and beyond. This collaboration demonstrates a shared forward-thinking vision, leveraging expertise and extensive experience from the SYNERGY NORTH team.

## Community Groups And Organizations

SYNERGY NORTH participated in 40 industry groups or organizations. New notable groups included:

- ▶ Thunder Bay Tesla Support Group
- ▶ The EV Society
- ▶ Electric Vehicle Association of Northern Ontario

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Statement of Comprehensive Income	
Revenues	\$141,387,453
Expenses	\$139,334,078
Earnings Before Taxes	\$2,053,375
Payments In Lieu of Corporate Taxes	\$646,401
Earnings For Year	\$1,406,973
Statement of Financial Position	
Net capital expenditures for the year	\$15,197,165
<i>Financial highlights for SYNERGY NORTH Corporation are not consolidated for 2023</i>	





34 CUMBERLAND STREET NORTH | THUNDER BAY, ON | P7A 4L4 | T: (807) 343-1111 | 1-833-428-1451

[synergynorth.ca](http://synergynorth.ca)