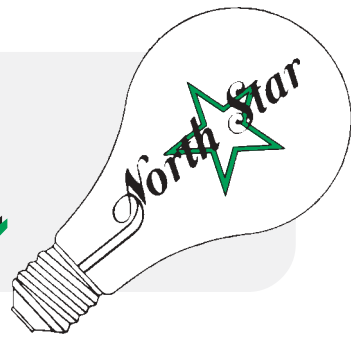


The

# Enlightener



North Star  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

VOLUME 49 NUMBER 5

BAUDETTE, MINNESOTA

MAY 2003



By Dan Hoskins  
General Manager

## Now is the time

Now is the time to start thinking about it. Thinking about what you ask? Thinking about the upcoming heating season. Yes that's right, heating season. Did you know that this year of load control was a little abnormal, but not too far off base of what it is supposed to be. So now is the time to start thinking about it.

Think about the backup system you have. Is it adequate? Does it keep up? Is it efficient? Is it automatic? How about your propane tank—is it full? Check the summer fill prices and make sure that you are full for the beginning of the season. These are things that we think our members of North Star should have, but some do not.

So, with that in mind, check this information off your list and if your backup heating system is a problem, call North Star Electric. We have programs that will assist you in replacing your old, inadequate heating system and our member service department would be glad to assist you.

*“Minnkota does not control the load to sell the power on the open market.”*

Load control could very well be headed in the direction of 200 – 500 hours every heating season. With winter eventually coming back, high natural gas prices and colder temperatures in the south and east, these load control hours could be a reality for seasons to come. What does cold weather in the south and east along with high natural gas prices have to do with our load control?

Well, some of the generating plants in the southern states are powered by natural gas because they are cheaper to build and

conform easier to the industry as far as emissions are concerned. But, when natural gas prices go up, so does the wholesale price of power being produced (Russell Stiles 556-27-005-02). So thanks to deregulated transmission lines and colder temperatures in the eastern part of the U.S., it is cheaper for those utilities to buy power on the open market at 6, 7 or 8 cents a kilowatt, (heck it even hit 12 cents at one time this past season), than to produce it themselves.

So when this happens, of course we cannot buy off-peak heating power for 6,7 or 8 cents a kilowatt and then turn around and sell it for 3.1 cents. That is not good math; we have to control the off-peak loads. One other thing, No, Minnkota Power Cooperative does not control the load to sell the power on the open market! Contrary to what you may hear, there is no truth to Minnkota controlling load to sell it somewhere else.

So there you have a short note on what you should look at this summer before the next heating season. Plus if you have any questions concerning our programs, call our member service department and they will be happy to help you.

Have a great month, stay safe and God bless our troops.

**We will be closed  
Monday, May 26,  
in  
observance  
of  
Memorial  
Day.**



# The Enlightener

May 2003

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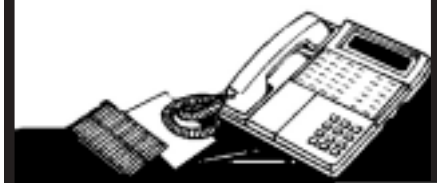
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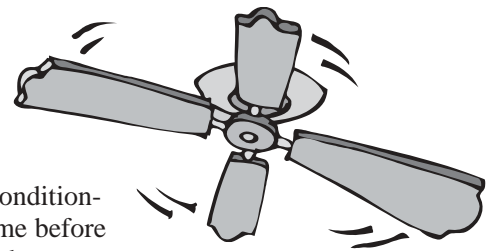
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## March 2003 Operating Report

Revenue (includes annual seasonal billing) . . . . .	\$ 680,528
Cost of Power . . . . .	\$ 364,580
Operation, Maintenance, Administration . . . . .	\$ 178,407
Depreciation, Interest . . . . .	\$ 115,020
Margin on Operations . . . . .	\$ 22,521
Average use per Residential . . . . .	2,061
Total kWhs Sold . . . . .	11,639,744

## Don't forget about fans for beating the heat



We've become so accustomed to air conditioning that sometimes we forget what came before – those old-fashioned fans that helped keep our parents and grandparents cool during the hot summer months.

Fans have not outlived their usefulness! Ceiling fans are a popular addition to many homes, providing extra cooling power that makes it possible to be comfortable, even when you set your air conditioning thermostat at a higher temperature. On days when you just need a bit of a breeze instead of a deep freeze or on those pleasant nights, a ceiling fan alone can keep you nice and cool.

But ceiling fans aren't the whole story. Small portable fans set at floor level can keep cold air, which sinks, moving up where you need it. Larger window fans can be used to pull cool air inside or draft hot air out, and may provide all the cooling power you need when the humidity is fairly low. And whole-house or attic fans have been around for years, doing an excellent job of cooling entire homes.

So don't overlook the good old-fashioned fan this summer. In combination with your air conditioner or alone, fans can help you save energy and stay cool.

## WE NEED YOUR METER READING!

Please read your meter on or as near the 25<sup>th</sup> of EACH month as possible. We must have your reading by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the next month to avoid an estimated bill. If a bill consecutively estimates two times, the crew will read the meter and a \$15 fee will be added to the account.

### — Please Note —

*Bills that are past due will be charged a 1.5 percent late payment fee. Bills that are 30 days past due will also be charged a \$2 delinquent notice fee.*

# Garrison Dam-Center Plant Tour

## Two fun-filled days

Join us in  
air-conditioned  
comfort

**Only  
\$50**



North Star Electric Co-op is planning a bus tour to North Dakota on June 2-3 (Monday and Tuesday), 2003.

The tour will visit the hydroelectric plant at Garrison Dam on Lake Sakakawea on the first day. Participants will stay at the beautiful Seven Seas Motel in Mandan, N.D. The second day they will get to see the Milton

R. Young Station at Center, N.D., where most of the electricity we use is generated. This will also include a tour of the open pit coal mines where huge machines strip the coal and reclaim the land so it can once again be used for agriculture.

The tour will leave from North Star's new office building located just one mile north of Baudette on Hwy. 172 on June 2 at 6 a.m. The tour is open to all North Star members and their spouses. Members from the east end of our service area may board the bus at Rogers Corner or make arrangements to be picked up at some point along the route.

The cost for the tour will be \$50 per person. This includes transportation on a 47-passenger, air-conditioned bus, lodging, meals and lunches.

For further details, contact Wayne Haukaas at 634-2202 or 888-634-2202.

Please use the handy registration form below.

*Please print names of participants the way you would like them to appear on your name tags. Your deposit will be refunded if the tour is cancelled or if you should find that you cannot make the trip for some unforeseen reason. We will send further details prior to departure. Return with check for \$50 per person to:*

**North Star Electric Co-op**  
P.O. Box 719 • Baudette, MN 56623

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Room Preference:     Smoking     Non-smoking

Have you enjoyed this trip in the past? No/Yes If yes, what year? \_\_\_\_\_

# Help Keep Your Lights On



Careless ditch burning can destroy utility poles and junction boxes, leading to unnecessary power outages. Pole damage ranges from surface charring to destruction, and may cost landowners anywhere from \$2,000 on up, depending on the location of the pole and the severity of the damage.

Please use extreme caution when burning around our electrical equipment, and always tend to a fire once it is lit. Let's all do our part to keep the lights on and costs down.

## Power quality service

For only \$4.95 per month, North Star will install surge protection in your home. This includes a meter base unit, an 8-outlet surge strip and a cube receptacle. For more information, call Wayne today at:

**Baudette . . . . . 218-634-2202**  
**Toll-Free . . . . . 888-634-2202**



# Office notes

From Ann Ellis, Office Manager

**“Teamwork is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon goals.”**

–unknown



## Rate increase

The new rates have been applied to the bills we prepared this month. We have talked about this rate increase in the *Enlightener* for the past several months, so I'll keep this brief:

- We are passing on only the Minnkota wholesale rate increase
- The fixed cost to have service available at your residence is about \$30/month, regardless of your kWh usage
- The maximum amount your general single-phase bill will increase is \$7.50
- Rates have increased only twice in 11 years
- Cost reductions have been put in place
- The off-peak rate still gives members twice the Btu's compared to LP
- North Star's residential rate is STILL below state, regional and national averages

Printed below is a spreadsheet showing the effect of the GSP rate increase for different levels of kwh usage. If you have any questions or would like help with your billing statement, please call me or Billing Coordinator Pat Olson.

Cumulative kWhs	kWh Block	Block Charge		Block Charge		% increase	\$ Increase
		Past Rate	Total Bill	Current Rate	Total Bill		
Fixed Charge:		\$12.50	<b>12.50</b>	\$17.00	<b>\$17.00</b>	36.0%	\$4.50
100	100	0.099	<b>22.40</b>	0.093	<b>26.30</b>	17.4	3.90
200	100	0.099	<b>32.30</b>	0.093	<b>35.60</b>	10.2	3.30
300	100	0.099	<b>42.20</b>	0.093	<b>44.90</b>	6.4	2.70
400	100	0.099	<b>52.10</b>	0.093	<b>54.20</b>	4.0	2.10
500	100	0.099	<b>62.00</b>	0.093	<b>63.50</b>	2.4	1.50
600	100	0.063	<b>68.30</b>	0.093	<b>72.80</b>	6.6	4.50
700	100	0.063	<b>74.60</b>	0.093	<b>82.10</b>	10.1	7.50
800	100	0.063	<b>80.90</b>	0.063	<b>88.40</b>	9.3	7.50
900	100	0.063	<b>87.20</b>	0.063	<b>94.70</b>	8.6	7.50
1000	100	0.063	<b>93.50</b>	0.063	<b>101.00</b>	8.0	7.50
1100	100	0.063	<b>99.80</b>	0.063	<b>107.30</b>	7.5	7.50
1200	100	0.063	<b>106.10</b>	0.063	<b>113.60</b>	7.1	7.50
1300	100	0.063	<b>112.40</b>	0.063	<b>119.90</b>	6.7	7.50
1400	100	0.063	<b>118.70</b>	0.063	<b>126.20</b>	6.3	7.50
1500	100	0.063	<b>125.00</b>	0.063	<b>132.50</b>	6.0	7.50
1600	100	0.063	<b>131.30</b>	0.063	<b>138.80</b>	5.7	7.50
1700	100	0.063	<b>137.60</b>	0.063	<b>145.10</b>	5.5	7.50
1800	100	0.063	<b>143.90</b>	0.063	<b>151.40</b>	5.2	7.50
1900	100	0.063	<b>150.20</b>	0.063	<b>157.70</b>	5.0	7.50
2000	100	0.063	<b>156.50</b>	0.063	<b>164.00</b>	4.8	7.50

## Super Salad

2 pkgs. lemon pie filling (not instant)

2 pkgs. (3 oz.) orange Jell-O

3 cups cold water

1-20 oz. crushed pineapple, undrained

Prepare lemon pie filling according to pkg. While hot stir in 2 pkgs. orange Jell-O. Add water and pineapple. Stir well. Pour into a 9"x13" pan and chill until firm (overnight is good).

Topping:

1 pkg. lemon instant pudding

1-8 oz. carton Cool Whip

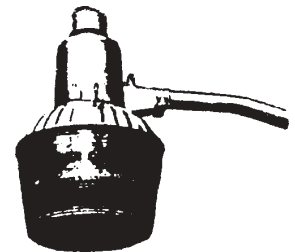
Mix the two and spread over chilled gelatin mixture.

Garnish with coconut or a cherry. Serves about 15

people. You can use lime Jell-O instead of the orange if you prefer.

Submitted by: Edy Lindstrom  
Baudette, Minn.

## Let us light up your life

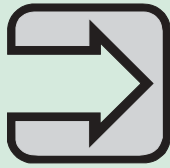


We can install and maintain a High Pressure Sodium Security Light on your property

FREE installation and only \$7.25 per month

\* Installation charges and/or higher monthly charges could apply in some instances.

At your service we remain. . .



## West End News

By Steve Ellis  
Baudette District Operations Supervisor

Summer is here and with it comes a busy schedule; we have received several requests for new services and upgrades for the summer. We will be working on some old underground cable replacements. Some of this cable is old and starting to break down, which causes unnecessary outages and some major inconveniences to both our members and linemen. It will be good to get that changed out.

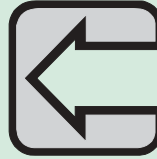
We will be installing a new connection between Sandy Shores and Birch Beach to better serve our members in case of power outages in that area. This will be a very small-cost project with great benefits.

There will be a contractor working on the line rebuild north of Williams this summer; this is a 6.4-mile line rebuild to step that feeder up to 14.4 voltage. This line improvement will help us carry the continued growth in the lake area.

Have a safe and sunny summer!

## East End News

By Allan Baumgartner  
Littlefork District Operations Supervisor



Our crews finished up with the construction part of the line rebuild down to Kinmount. The new line is now energized with the Ash Lake load on it. We still have the 3.5 miles of old conductor and poles to remove. We also have some pole change-outs to get done on Rainy Lake. Quite a few of them are in tough spots. It is difficult to get our equipment into the areas due to the rock and the new road construction on Gold Shores.

New service requests are coming in at a pretty good pace, so if you're planning on building and needing a service, now is the time to call in and get on our list. (Ralph W. Pickering 448-29-003-06) Keep in mind that there is a 48-hour waiting period on the Gopher One Call system.

In between new service work, we have several underground cable replacement jobs to finish this summer. Some of the old cable we have out there is in pretty tough shape.

We had seven outages in April, but three of them were planned by our crew for construction and maintenance work.

## Problems paying your electric bill?

*Energy assistance may be available!*

If you are receiving a low income or suffering from a temporary financial shortfall, the following agencies may be able to assist you with your electric bill. We urge you to contact them immediately to avoid disconnection if you feel you are eligible for aid.

- **Lake of the Woods County Community Services**  
P.O. Box G-0200  
Baudette, MN 56623  
Phone: 634-2642
- **Northwest Community Action Council**  
P.O. Box 67  
Badger, MN 56714-0067  
Phone: 1-800-568-5329
- **Koochiching County Community Services**  
1000 5th St.  
International Falls, MN 56649  
Phone: 283-7000
- **Kootasca Community Action, Inc.**  
2232 2nd Ave. E.  
P.O. Box 44  
International Falls, MN 56649  
Phone: 283-9491 or 1-800-559-9491
- **Kootasca Community Action, Inc.**  
1213 SE 2nd Ave.  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744-3984  
Phone: 1-800-422-0312
- **Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency**  
702 3rd Ave. S.  
Virginia, MN 55792-2797  
Phone: 1-800-662-5711

person with Alzheimer's struggles to find words, finish thoughts or follow directions.

The Alzheimer's Association is a nationwide network of chapters that offers programs and services for people with the disease, their families and their caregivers. They offer support groups throughout the state of Minnesota to help you through the disease. They also provide educational seminars and a variety of publications on the disease, on current research, care-giving approaches and more. You can contact the Alzheimer's Association Minnesota-Dakotas Chapter at its 24/7 helpline - 1-800-232-0851.

## What is Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's disease is a disorder of the brain that causes a steady decline in memory. It affects about 10 percent of the people in the United States who are over the age of 65 and nearly 50 percent of those age 85 or older. An estimated 4.5 million Americans have Alzheimer's or some type of permanent memory loss. More and more Americans are even get-

ting the disease in their 40s and 50s.

Alzheimer's disease usually begins gradually, causing a person to forget recent events and to have difficulty performing familiar tasks. How rapidly the disease advances varies from person to person, causing confusion, personality and behavior changes, and impaired judgment. Communication becomes difficult as the

# Highlights of the board of directors meeting

April 2, 2003

These are the highlights from the board of directors meeting held on April 2, 2003. Detailed minutes are available at the Cooperative for member review. The next regular board meeting is tentatively set for June 4, 2003. If you wish to speak with the board or have an item that you would like to have placed on the agenda, please contact Manager Dan Hoskins at least one week in advance to be included on the agenda.

All directors were present except Director Trueman. They acted upon usual, routine business. In addition, they voted to sponsor the National Child ID program which will provide the ID packets to parents of all children in our service territory plus those in Baudette, International Falls and Warroad.

## Management and operations report

General Manager Hoskins reported on the REMA conference, parliamentary procedures training, Minnkota items, after-hours outage dispatching, results of the meeting with NRTC and the Minnesota Broadcasters to discuss network programming on DirecTV, announcement of Duluth's NBC channel to become available on DirecTV to subscribers in the Duluth DMA (east of Birchdale) in December, equipment upgrades that will be required to receive the Duluth station, the Minnkota and Square Butte annual meetings, Member Appreciation Days, line loss, letters of support to troops from our area, and the current budget status of train-

ing/meetings. He also reported on Operations items including personnel, new service requests and equipment.

## Office report

Office Manager Ellis provided the financial report and information about cross-training, proximities to retirement age for office staff, cost and implementation of the after-hours dispatching, line construction loan funds and disconnects for non-payment.

## Compliance and member services report

Manager of Compliance and Member Services Haukaas reported on the scholarship contest, Center Power Plant Tour, printing costs of the Enlightener, contractor training, DIRECWAY satellite Internet, the upcoming WildBlue Ka band satellite Internet anticipated first quarter 2004, and plans and equipment requirements for implementation of the Duluth LIL (local into local) network broadcast on DirecTV.

## Board reports and other discussion

Discussion regarding reducing director per diem was tabled. Director Bergan suggested that the board update the Strategic Plan, and management was directed to bring facilitator options to the board for their considerations.

## Off-Peak Loan Program for Automatic Backup Systems

If your off-peak backup heating system is in need of repair or replacement, we may be able to help.

From 1977 to 2000, we had an average of 34 hours of control per heating season. Last year, we had only 22 hours of control; the year before, we had 177 hours. This past heating season, we had 407 hours. The years of 20 to 40 hours of control are gone. In the future, you can expect 200 to 500 hours per heating season.

**You must have a reliable backup heating system.**

North Star Electric will lend up to \$2,500 for upgrading members' existing off-peak backup systems when the following terms and conditions are met:

1. On approved credit.
2. \$2,500 maximum.
3. 6 percent interest.
4. 1 to 3-year term.
5. Payment will be added to existing electric bill (\$25 minimum per month).
6. \$35 filing fee.
7. Must be existing off-peak member.
8. Automatic backup system only (no wood or manual systems).
9. Must furnish sales receipt from contractor or vendor.
10. Job must be completed before loan is approved for payment by member services department.
11. Outstanding loan balance at termination of service is due in full.



**Gopher State One Call**

**It's the LAW**

**CALL BEFORE YOU DIG**

Minnesota Statewide One Call Notification Center

**1-800-252-1166**

## DirectTV FREEVIEW events for May

### Tune to channel #103

Tune to DIRECTV channel 103 and enjoy Motley Crue and Matchbox Twenty. DIRECTV® FREEVIEW® Events, premiering June 6 and airing every day throughout June.

We are proud to present this concert to you – at no additional charge – as our way of saying . . .

*“Thanks for allowing us to serve you!”*

## P-4 access card change-out

We’ve been telling you for quite some time now that there will be an access card change-out coming. This process has begun and some of you will be receiving your new cards soon – others may be a while yet. They will be doing this in phases, so please don’t worry if your card doesn’t come immediately and your neighbor’s does. DirecTV has a system worked out where they will be doing this in phases, with only a certain number of cards going out at one time.

When you do get your new card, please follow the instructions carefully. You will be instructed as to what to do with an on-screen menu. If you are able to view this instruction screen, everything should be functioning normally and you should be able to proceed. If your card comes damaged in any way and you are not able to view the instruction screen, you will need to call us.

If you have any problems with the process, please do not hesitate to call one of our offices. We have wonderful customer service representatives who are here to help you!

## Equipment problems?

If you are having problems with your DirecTV system, please give us a call. We are here to help you.

If your existing system quits working properly, we have an exchange program where we will exchange your unit with one of ours at little or no cost to you. Please call one of our offices for more details.

## Seasonal Accounts

We have received lots of calls from our snowbird customers. Please keep in mind that the \$6 reactivation fee will be applied when we reinstate your services. Also, please make sure that you provide our office with your new address and telephone number to be used for the summer months.

**Tune into channels 200, 201 or 500 to get all the latest updates about equipment, DirecTV movies, pay-per-view events and more!**

## BLOCKBUSTER TICKET

**only on DIRECTV**

*Movies ONLY \$3.99 when you order by remote!*

## Attention C-Band viewers



**DIRECTV.**

SATELLITE TV AT ITS BEST

**Call North Star Electric today for our newest C-Band promotion for converting over to DirecTV.**

In Baudette,  
contact Wayne Haukaas:  
**218-634-2202 or 1-888-634-2202**

In Littlefork,  
contact Steve Polkinghorne:  
**218-278-6658 or 1-888-258-2008**

## DIRECWAY Satellite High-Speed Internet Systems

***now in stock!***

We have installed a DIRECWAY system at each of our offices and they are working well.

*Call us today  
with any questions you have  
about the DIRECWAY system.*

# RCA Satellite System & Phase 3 Antenna

(Capable of 4 receivers & local programming – when available)

**Installed for only \$99.00**

(Save over \$300.00 from our regular price.)

<u>ADD UP YOUR SAVINGS:</u>	<u>VALUE</u>	<u>SALE</u>
**RCA System-Antenna	\$259.00	\$ 99.00
Basic Installation	95.00	FREE
Surge Protector	20.00	FREE
1 Month Total Choice Plus	<u>37.99</u>	<u>FREE</u>
	<b>\$411.99</b>	<b>\$ 99.00</b>

- Warranty & damaged equipment exchange program is available to all subscribers.
  - \*\*1-year commitment to Total Choice or larger programming package.
  - Must be a new DirecTV account & purchase programming from North Star Electric.
  - Must reside in USA & North Star Electric's DBS sales territory.
  - Activation fees are charged per unit - \$10.00 NSEC members & \$20.00 non-members.
  - All sports channels, pay-per-view & additional receivers require a telephone connection.
- 
- \*\*1-year commitment to Total Choice or higher programming package required.  
If you downgrade or terminate programming during the 1-year commitment, \$40.00 will be charged to you.

**ADDITIONAL RECEIVERS ONLY \$149.00**

**(Free Basic Installation & Programming is only \$1.95 a month)**

## EMPLOYEE PROFILE

### Carving fish decoys a real passion for Gary Hull

Gary Hull started working part time at North Star in 1980 on the brushing crew. He attended lineman's school at Wadena Tech from 1981-82. He began full time at North Star as an apprentice lineman in 1982. He achieved his Journeyman Lineman's license in 1985. What he enjoys most about working at North Star is meeting the members; but even more so, he likes knowing that he has helped members when restoring their power after storm damage.

Gary is originally from the Mahnomen area. He graduated from Roseau High School in 1973 and attended two years at Detroit Lakes Tech for auto mechanics. Gary lives south of Graceton with his wife,



Gary Hull holds up two of his decoys that he enjoys making when not working at North Star Electric.

Kathy. He has four children and two grandchildren.

He enjoys hunting, fishing, trapping and making fish decoys (Norman/Sally Berg 140-06-038-02). Gary began making the decoys in December 2001 while recovering from back surgery. In March 2003, he entered his first competition where he received Third, Fourth, and Fifth Place rankings in several different categories. Gary has said, "When it

comes to decoys, if you can think of it, I can try to make it." He is currently making a walleye decoy that will be a prize for the MREA Fishing Tournament on June 7 at Cass Lake, Minn.