

The

# Enlightener



North Star  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



VOLUME 49 NUMBER 5

BAUDETTE, MINNESOTA

MAY 2004



## Always working for you

By Dan Hoskins  
General Manager

Last month, I talked with you concerning some of the construction projects that your Cooperative will be doing this summer. With this article, I would like to tell you about some of the things that the people you elect and the employees who work at NSEC do to keep our rates down and our service exceptional.

Your Cooperative, and the way it does things, is governed by, or directed by, a set of policies that covers the operation of the Cooperative, the employees of the Cooperative, the directors of the Cooperative and you, our members.

### How policies are made

The policies are made from a number of documents and rules, and each

policy is reviewed by the Board of Directors. Every so often, the policies need to be updated with additions to a particular policy or deletions from a particular policy, and this enables your Cooperative to stay on top of things according to changes in our economics or the times of our area.

The staff at North Star Electric Cooperative has worked on each policy over the past three months and will be making recommendations to the Board of Directors for final approval.

We have also hired Attorney Steve Anderson of Warroad, Minn., to be the Cooperative's new legal counsel. Steve replaces Bill Brink who retired last fall. In addition to Steve's law office in Warroad, he has opened a law office in Baudette to provide better service to his clients of the Baudette area.

One of the things that Steve will assist the Board of Directors with is updating the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation for your review at our next annual meeting. This set of documents must also be brought

up to date to keep North Star Electric Cooperative's rules and regulations current. These Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation are the mainstay of our business, and they are the rules in which we were founded and must be kept current.

These are the rules you make. Any changes or additions will be brought to you at your annual meeting for discussion and review and for you to vote on, so I will keep you posted on any and all progress concerning this work.

### A great team

A strategic planning session is being looked at for some time in August. This gives your Board of Directors, the Manager and the North Star staff a chance to get together to look at what changes or areas of service your Cooperative should consider providing our members. (783-29-035-02 Mark L. Meester) This is done once every three to five years and has some great consequences, such as our DBS service that we provide.

So you see, the people you elect as Board members, and the people who are employed by the Cooperative, make up a great team. The duties we have and the things we do are always looking and coming together to work on ways that will help maintain great service to you and affordable rates for you.

God Bless you and stay safe.

**We will be closed  
Monday, May 31,  
in  
observance  
of  
Memorial  
Day.**



May 2004

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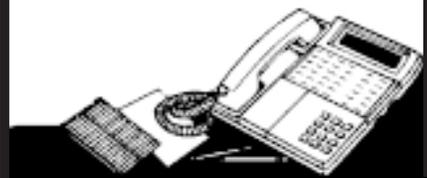
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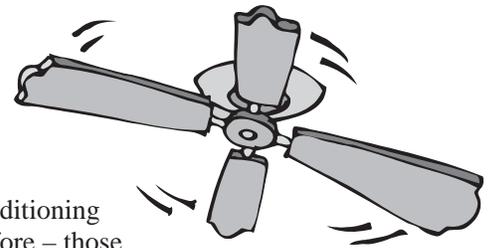
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March 2004  
**Operating Report**

Revenue . . . . .	\$ 735,388
Cost of Power . . . . .	\$ 359,176
Operation, Maintenance, Administration . . . . .	\$ 189,427
Depreciation, Interest . . . . .	\$ 128,062
Margin on Operations . . . . .	\$ 58,723
Average use per Residential . . . . .	1,993
Total kWhs Sold . . . . .	11,673,276

**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



North Star Electric Cooperative is planning a bus tour to North Dakota on June 1-2 (Tuesday and Wednesday), 2004.

The tour will include a visit to 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 visit the Milton R. Young Station near 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 bus will leave from North Star's new office building located just one mile north of Baudette on Hwy. 172 on June 1 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?

## CURRENT ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS

State law requires that every new electrical installation in any construction, remodeling, replacement or repair shall file a certificate for inspection with the State Board of Electricity and be inspected by a Minnesota electrical inspector.

■ *Koochiching and St. Louis counties:*  
**Lee Herseth**  
10078 Gappa Road  
Ray, MN 56669  
Phone: (218) 875-3028  
7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

■ *Roseau and Lake of the Woods counties:*  
**Laurence Otto**  
60426 County Road 12  
Warroad, MN 56763  
Phone: (218) 386-2299  
7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

## 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

## Gopher State One Call



It's the **LAW**  
**CALL BEFORE YOU DIG**

Minnesota Statewide One Call  
Notification Center

**1-800-252-1166**

# Meth: An American gothic horror

## How to recognize meth labs and meth cookers in your community

**M**ethamphetamine is a highly toxic and addictive drug made in make-shift labs using mostly common household chemicals. Meth labs may be set up at homes, campgrounds, rest areas, rental properties ... just about anywhere a “cooker” thinks he can get away with the smell in solitude for a couple of hours.

Though most users are unemployed or blue-collar rural white men aged 25-40, use among rural high school and even junior high students is growing. State police say meth makers they’ve arrested include a grandmother in her late 60s, a suburbanite in a \$300,000 home and one pharmaceutical researcher pulling in a six-figure salary.

You can help police stop illegal meth labs by learning the signs and reporting them to the police.

How can you recognize a meth lab? Alone, any of these activities or signs may not mean meth manufacturing is occurring. However, a combination of them may indicate a problem:

- Strong odors of solvents or ammonia coming from the house, garage or detached buildings.
- Windows blacked out or curtains all ways drawn.
- Exhaust fans running constantly; windows open in all weather.
- Excessive trash with numerous empty bottles and containers, coffee filters with red stains, and lithium batteries that have been broken open.
- Visitors and activity at all hours.
- Person doesn’t work, yet seems to have money, pays bills with cash.
- Presence of weapons, especially sawed-off shotguns, handguns.
- Extensive security in place, or odd “No Trespassing” signs posted, or



# Office notes

From Ann Ellis, Office Manager

Instead of printing a quick quote, I'd like to point you to <http://www.theinterviewwithgod.com> for some thought-provoking observations.

## *We appreciate your patience*

### Local television stations

We're as anxious as you are to get those local stations, and a good number of you are poised, ready with compatible DirecTV equipment, to view them as soon as they're available. I'm hoping that by the time you get this, we'll be within a couple of weeks of offering you network stations from our local area.

### Satellite high-speed Internet

Here's another service you've been so patiently waiting for. WildBlue is scheduled to launch this fall. (675-24-002-02 Stan R. Long) This affordable two-way satellite Internet service will bring high-speed service to everyone in our service area, not just those close to hard-wired equipment.

The more participants we have, the thinner the fixed costs can be spread. Thank you for your support by waiting to buy these services from your cooperative, the business YOU own.

At your service we remain. . .

boldly painted on buildings.

- Presence of precursors used to make meth — multiple packages of cold tablets containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, cans of engine starter fluid, camping fuel, antifreeze, drain cleaner, salt, acids, jugs, jars and bottles, funnels and tubing, propane or pressurized tanks (often stained with blue-green corrosion and fitted with make-shift valves).

How can you tell if someone is using meth? Symptoms may include:

- Inability to sleep or eat.
- Nervous physical activity, like scratching, rocking, wringing of hands.
- Irritability, dizziness or confusion.
- Severe weight loss.
- Flushed or tense appearance.
- Chemical odors on breath or clothes.
- Excessive sweating, body odor.
- Rapid speech; rambling conversation.
- Rotting teeth, poor hygiene.
- Scars, acne and open sores.
- Paranoia, depression.

Warnings: If you think you've

found remnants of a meth lab on your property or along a roadside, get away from it. Discarded meth labs are toxic hazards that can include anhydrous ammonia and/or hydrochloric acid in unsuitable containers. Their contents can explode or be released if moved or even jarred slightly. Call your sheriff's department or the nearest state police post.

If you observe trespassers or suspect people are on your property making meth, do not confront them. If they are meth makers, they may be armed.

**Be safe: call your local police immediately to have them investigate.**

Source: *Electric Consumer*





## West End News

By Steve Ellis

Baudette District Operations Supervisor

The change of seasons has brought us some very nice weather and, of course, some that's not so great! The summer season always brings us plenty of work to be done with all the new activity with member, county, state, city, cable TV, telephone and gas projects. Then, you can throw on top of that North Star Electric's projects which include a V-phase line rebuild of four miles south of Baudette, replacing old troubled 15-kV underground cables, maintaining the rights of way, the continual task of keeping our records and maps up to date, and training and keeping our personnel safe and ready to take on all tasks that might come their way.

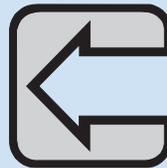
Now, just a few thoughts about the summer storm season that is upon us again. When your electricity goes off, your job, as a member, is to notify us of your problem and your location. From that moment on, the wheels are set in motion to get your power restored in the safest and fastest means possible. Our line technicians are very dedicated and will drop whatever they are doing and come in to work at any time of the day or night. Sometimes, you may think it takes a long time to get your power restored, but keep in mind the travel time needed to get to your area, the time locating the problem and then fixing it, as well as the safety practices that these men must follow for your safety, as well as their own.

Please, also, remember that you will experience more power blinks and failures during the summer months. Our power comes from North Dakota and has to travel many miles of lines through, possibly, several storms to get to your home. With all these miles and all the things that can happen, there is no economic way to give you electricity 100 percent of the time. Mother Nature and man-made causes will always be out there blowing things down and digging things up. Despite these obstacles, we are here to deliver you the best possible service, and will always strive to be as safe, fast and reliable as possible.

## East End News

By Allan Baumgartner

Littlefork District Operations Supervisor



Our crews have finished the annual line inspection and meter readings and have followed up with some line maintenance work that was needed right away. Leaking insulators, bad anchors and leaning trees were taken care of by our line crews before the problems caused power outages.

Our crews have been clearing brush and removing danger trees along our power lines in the Loman and Littlefork areas. We're hoping we can clean up the brushing before the ground gets too soft.

A few new services and service upgrades are starting to trickle in; our crews will start working on some of them soon. We'll also start working on two different jobs on our work plan in the Rainy Lake and Pelland Junction areas when the ground dries up a bit.

We had only four individual outages in April.

## Energy tip: Compact fluorescents save money and energy



ENERGY STAR labeled light bulbs, or compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), are up to 75 percent more efficient than standard incandescent light bulbs, give off the same light output and last up to 10 times longer.

CFLs have changed a lot in recent years. They are available in various sizes to fit almost any lamp, chandelier or other light fixture, including dimmable and motion detector fixtures. The bulb's appearance ranges from a globe shape to two slender tubes twisted like a coil.

"You'll find the quality of light is equal to that of incandescents," said Phil Smith, energy specialist. "And there is no hum or noise that is sometimes associated with older tube-shaped fluorescent lights."

CFLs emit the same amount of light as standard bulbs, but because they use significantly less energy than incandescent bulbs, they have lower wattage ratings than people are accustomed to purchasing. For example, a 15 watt CFL replaces a 60 watt incandescent bulb, an 18 to 20 watt CFL replaces a 75 watt bulb and a 25 to 28 watt CFL bulb replaces a 100 watt bulb.

While all CFLs use less energy than incandescent light bulbs, it is a good idea to watch for the ENERGY STAR symbol when shopping around.

The potential savings on energy bills is significant. The typical household spends about 10 to 15 percent of their electrical bill, an average of \$110 a year, on lighting.

Source: Minnesota Department of Commerce

# Highlights of the board of directors meeting

April 7, 2004

These are the highlights from the board of directors meeting held on April 7, 2004. Detailed minutes are available at the Cooperative for member review. Regular board meetings are held the first Wednesday of every month. 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. They acted upon usual, routine business. In addition they voted to purchase two pickups from low bidder Sheridan Motors, to purchase a bucket truck, to trade in the outboard motor for a larger one, and to amend the line extension policy to require a larger portion of line extension costs to be paid by the person requesting the extension.

## Management and operations report

General Manager Hoskins reported on the CEO Orientation in Washington, D.C., WildBlue beta-test sites, dates for strategic planning, the all-employee meeting, a legal issue, a service request, line loss, automated meter reading presentations, plans to work with Attorney Anderson on the Articles & Bylaws, staff completion of review of the policy manual, and the Littlefork office remodeling project. (715-32-022-01 David S. Hudnall) On the Operations side he reported on the DOT inclusion of North Star's Littlefork district large trucks in abiding by road restrictions except during emergencies, equipment, new construction, right-of-

way, outages, safety & training, MAYDAY emergency procedures, Gopher State One Call informational meetings, a land development near Rainy Lake, the cost of line moves, and some failing URD cable.

## Office report

Office Manager Ellis reported on financials, property taxes, HIPAA compliance, past due accounts, implementation of the rate increases, partnering with Lake of the Woods County Social Service Department by including a "Child Abuse Prevention" stuffer with our bills, studying electronic payment options for power bills, loan conversions, FEMA's request for documentation, conveyance of the value of fringe benefits to employees, the Wellness Program, and refinancing debt.

## Compliance and member services report

Manager of Member Services Haukaas reported on load control, upcoming Youth Scholarship testing, Customer Appreciation Days, IPP (incremental pricing plan for off-peak commercial accounts) metering and data translation, member satisfaction with the IPP option, and DirecTV issues including instant callbacks in IPPV, LIL, fees, and conversion bonuses for LIL sales.

## Board reports and other discussion

Minnkota Delegate Brzoznowski reported on their recent board meeting and the annual meeting. The board thanked Delegate Brzoznowski for his many years of service on the Minnkota Board.

## 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.

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 our member services department.
11. Outstanding loan balance at termination of service is due in full.

## Electricity: Use it wisely



Frayed wires are dangerous anywhere. They should be repaired at once, by someone who knows how, or better yet, replaced.

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

## 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.

## BLOCKBUSTER TICKET

– only on DIRECTV –  
**Movies ONLY \$3.99**  
when you order by remote!



## Fine-tuning may be needed

If you have already had your equipment upgraded for the upcoming local networks, we ask that you please tune into **channel #99** to be sure that your equipment is receiving the new satellite signal that will be necessary in order to receive the local channels when available. If you do not have a display bar at the bottom of your screen on channel #99, call our office – there may be some fine-tuning needed on your equipment, and we want you to be all set and ready to view the local channels when they are here.

## New to DIRECTV? Questions or concerns?

Often times, these questions can be answered on **channel #201** – Everything you need to know to customize your DIRECTV system — from programming the remote, setting rating limits, renting a pay-per-view movie, checking for proper connections and troubleshooting.

## Instant callback feature

Soon, when you order a movie using your remote control, the charges will be downloaded onto your billing immediately rather than just before your billing cycle as in the past. This will be a nice feature; however, those of you who have dial-up Internet service will need to keep in mind that you must have a free, uninterrupted phone line to order a pay-per-view movie.

## Beware of purchasing used equipment!

We recently received word from DIRECTV that problems have arisen for some customers purchasing used equipment from garage sales or E-bay, and they were NOT able to activate these receivers to accept programming. There is a built-in security feature in new receivers called the “R.I.D.” number that doesn’t allow you to reactivate equipment that has been assigned to someone else! The receiver is basically useless to someone else; even if a new access card is purchased, programming cannot be restored to that receiver unless it’s the same original owner. We would not suggest purchasing used equipment to prevent this from happening to you.

## Duluth & Fargo networks

We still do not have an exact date for their arrival yet, but we have been assured that they are doing their best to finish this work promptly. We are anticipating a May or June time frame. We have been told, however, that when available, we may have very little notice. As soon as WE know a date and what the channel numbers will be, we will make sure YOU know also. So, stay tuned...



## 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**

*Share a favorite recipe with your North Country neighbors!*

Send to:

**North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

Attn: The Enlightener

P.O. Box 719

Baudette, MN 56623



# Spring Special

## RCA Satellite System & Phase 3 Antenna

(Antenna for local programming - when available)

**Installed for only \$49.99**

<u>ADD UP YOUR SAVINGS:</u>	<u>VALUE</u>	<u>SALE</u>
RCA System-Antenna	\$259.00	\$ 49.99
Basic Installation	95.00	FREE
Surge Protector	20.00	FREE
1 Month Total Choice Plus	39.99	FREE
	<u>\$413.99</u>	<u>\$ 49.99</u>

- Warranty & damaged equipment exchange program is available to all subscribers.
  - Must be a new DirecTV account & purchase programming from North Star Electric.
  - Must reside in USA & North Star Electric's DBS sales territory.
  - No free programming with second receiver. Additional receiver fee is \$2.99/mo.
  - Activation fees are charged per unit - \$10 NSEC members & \$20 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, \$100 will be charged to you.

**ADDITIONAL RECEIVERS ONLY \$49.99**

(Installation is extra & Programming is only \$2.99 a month)

## North Star Knowledge Scholarship Winners

<b>First place</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>Percent score</b>
	<b>School</b>	
Tyler Verworn	Warroad	90 %
<b>Second Place</b>	<b>\$400 each</b>	
	<b>School</b>	
Courtney Nelson	Littlefork/Big Falls	88 %
Rob Perala	Lake of the Woods	88 %
Tabitha Hunter	Warroad	86 %
Tanya Donahou	Littlefork/Big Falls	83 %



**Congratulations to this year's winners!**