


# The Enlightener



North Star  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

VOLUME 49 NUMBER 12

BAUDETTE, MINNESOTA

DECEMBER 2003

## Questions on Load Control?

Check it out on the Internet. Visit Minnkota's Web site:  
[www.minnkota.com](http://www.minnkota.com)

Click on the "Load Management" button and then the "North Star" button. This Web page contains load control plans, the current state of the load management system, the last 30 hours of control and the last switching cycle. Your specific load group information is on your electric bill. Please remember this is Minnkota's current estimate for controlling load. **Control plans can and do change several times each hour.**

Load groups starting with one (water heaters and grain dryers) are for short-term control up to four hours. Load groups starting with two (storage heat) are for medium-term control up to 16 hours. Load groups starting with three (dual heat) are for long-term control.

Illustrated above is what Minnkota's Web site looks like for the current state of the load management system. All of load group 2.01 is controlled and double order 12, 13, 19 and 20 of load group 2.02 are also controlled.

Member Service		Area Code											Last Transmission	
NSTAR		07											12/28/01 11:02:12	
		Double Order												
		09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
LOAD	1.01	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
	1.02	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
	2.01	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF
	2.02	ON	ON	ON	OFF	OFF	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	OFF	OFF	ON
GRAND	2.03	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
	2.04	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
	3.01	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
ROUPE	3.06	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
	3.07	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
	3.09	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
P	6.01	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON

*North Star  
offices will  
be closed*

Thursday, Dec. 25,  
Friday, Dec. 26,  
for  
Christmas  
and  
Thursday, Jan. 1,  
for New Year's Day



*Happy Holidays  
from everyone  
at  
North Star  
Electric*

# The Enlightener

December 2003

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Baudette, MN 56623

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\$1/year for non-members

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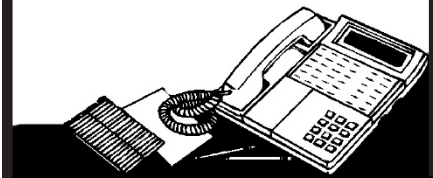
### If calling long distance, call toll-free

Baudette . . . . . 888-634-2202  
Littlefork . . . . . 888-258-2008  
DirecTV questions . . . . . 877-634-3322  
e-mail us at [nsec@wiktel.com](mailto:nsec@wiktel.com)  
Visit our Web site at  
[www.northstarelectric.coop](http://www.northstarelectric.coop)

## AFTER HOURS

DirecTV® Problems  
1-888-207-6266

**Electrical  
After-Hours  
Emergencies  
1-888-6OUTAGE  
(1-888-668-8243)  
634-2603**



## October 2003 Operating Report

Revenue . . . . .	\$ 589,811
Cost of Power . . . . .	\$ 278,235
Operation, Maintenance, Administration . . . . .	\$ 149,745
Depreciation, Interest . . . . .	\$ 122,901
Margin on Operations . . . . .	\$ 38,930
Average use per Residential . . . . .	1,217
Total kWhs Sold . . . . .	7,773,147

## 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 load control per heating season. This past heating season, we had 407 hours. The years of 20 to 40 hours of control are gone. This year, Minnkota Power Cooperative estimates 450 to 700 hours of load control.

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:**

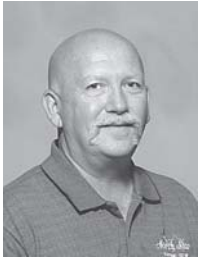
1. On approved credit
2. \$2,500 maximum
3. 6 percent interest
4. 1 to 3-year term
5. Payment will be added to existing electric bill (\$25 minimum per month)
6. \$35 filing fee
7. Must be an existing off-peak member
8. Automatic backup system only (no wood or manual systems)
9. Must furnish sales receipt 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

## 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.*



By Dan Hoskins  
General Manager

# Satellites will be flying high

The satellites will be, and are, flying high in the sky. What does this mean to North Star Electric Cooperative? Well, the satellite launch date is January of 2004 and this should bring local programming in all of our area. KBJR-NBC out of Duluth was the first to announce that they would be going up on satellite and now rumor has it that if you live in the Duluth service footprint, which is approximately from Birchdale east, all Duluth TV stations will be coming to a television set near you. The cost, we believe, of these local channels will be comparable to what it costs you now for the east and west coast feeds.

So if you are a DirecTV subscriber from North Star Electric, and you have had the phase 3 equipment change out and you live in the Duluth service area footprint, you should be able to purchase the local TV stations out of Duluth when they arrive. When are they going to arrive, you ask; we are trying to find out from either DirecTV or NRTC. North Star Electric employees Sue Williams and Wayne Haukaas are trying to find someone with an answer but it seems to be a secret. Ssshhh, as soon as they find out, we will let you know.

Now if you haven't had the phase 3 conversion, or at least signed up for it, you should contact North Star Electric and get on our list. If you're not a North Star DBS subscriber, call us; have we got a deal for you!

## Loss of east/west feeds

There has been talk that after the local channels become available, the east and west coast feeds could disappear. It has not been confirmed with NRTC that the east/west waivers will be rescinded in this viewing area, but as anything else, there are those rumors. NBC, out of Duluth, has already said they will rescind all of their waivers

concerning east/west NBC programming. This means that all customers of North Star DBS who are located in the Duluth viewing footprint will lose their NBC east/west coast feeds, and if the other stations follow suit, you will lose all east/west programming, and **this is whether you receive Duluth or not**. If we come up with any further information, we will keep you informed.

## Fargo to be added

Now for all of you folks who live west of Birchdale, rumor has it that Fargo will be added to the list of local programming and it will be the same time frame as Duluth, but we will keep you posted. So for all of you who would like to receive local programming, call our Member Service Department about having your satellite system changed out to the phase 3 conversion before the rush, and we will keep you posted on any new local developments. As above, we have no information on the status of losing the east/west programming in your area, but I would guess we would lose those waivers also.

Now this next bit of information is for all of our consumers, both electric and DBS and for any of your neighbors, whether they are members or not. (251-25-034-03 Leslie Johnson) The bill stuffer survey that we sent out at the end of August came back very favorable that North Star should offer Satellite Internet service. The survey, I must say, came back with an overwhelming percentage of response, 16 percent, that isn't too bad for a survey, with 76 percent in favor of North Star Electric Cooperative offering WildBlue Internet service to our customers.

## WildBlue by 2005

WildBlue is a form of Satellite Internet that will provide customers an Internet service that cannot access

any other type of high-speed Internet. The speed of this is going to be for residential use, 512 k download and 256 upload, and the business package features 1.5 M download and 512 k upload. WildBlue is an always-on Internet service. You can call our Member Service Department for further details.

One thing for our DBS subscribers – don't worry about having two dishes on your property. The WildBlue dish will also handle the DirecTV signal and this dish isn't much bigger than the DirecTV dish. I believe it measures approximately 26 inches. The WildBlue Internet service should be available, if all goes well, by early 2005.

## Opportunity

So you see, we have a lot of speculation and rumors but, when I say satellites are flying high over North Star Electric, this has and will bring opportunity to some of our rural people that otherwise would not have that benefit. North Star Electric is proud to be able to offer these services to our area.

One last thing – I would like to wish all of you a joyful and safe Holiday Season as we prepare to celebrate our Savior's Birthday and then get ready to usher in a new year. So from all of us here at North Star Electric, to all of you, have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Thanks for your time. . .

PS. God Bless our troops who are still doing their job!



# Office notes

From Ann Ellis, Office Manager

"Minutes are worth more than money. Spend them wisely." –Thomas Murphy

## Extremely cold temperatures will affect the operation of your rented security light



If you notice a problem with your security light this winter, such as intermittent failure or it remains dimmer than normal, you're not alone. Severe cold weather, specifically -10 degrees or colder, may seriously affect the operation of security lights.

The problem involves the formation of a gas in the bulb, which can be hampered by the cold. Usually, when the weather warms up, the lights will return to normal operation and will not have to be replaced.

If your security light is owned by North Star, we would appreciate it if you could bear with us during the coldest spells. If the light does not return to normal operation when the weather warms up, please notify our office and we will repair it for you (Baudette 634-2202, Littlefork 278-6658).

## Load control... what does it cost you?

If you're cringing at the thought of paying more per Btu when your backup system is operating, here are some numbers to help you decide if cringing is really worth it. If we assume that your home is 1,500 sq. ft. using 17,520 annual heating kWhs at 3.1 cents and propane at \$1.15/gallon burned in a 90 percent efficient furnace:

	200 hours of control	400 hours of control	600 hours of control	Controlled all winter
Electric heating cost	\$500	\$457	\$413	\$ 0
Backup propane heating cost	67	133	200	\$835
Total heating cost	\$567	\$590	\$613	\$835

For every 200 hours of control, you trade \$43 of electric Btus with \$67 of propane Btus, but control time is just a fraction of the heating season. Keep in mind all of the money you are saving during the NON-control times.

## Looking ahead to 2004

The budget is now finished and being reviewed by the board for approval. Our local costs will be completely covered with current rates; however, Minnkota is projecting a rate increase for March 2004. (556-41-042-09 Glenn Bannert) Should this happen, we will pass on the wholesale increase to you, but ONLY the wholesale increase. This could affect your bill by about 4 percent beginning with the bill you receive in May 2004.

## Christmas wishes...

Take time to reflect on all of your blessings. Some are large (your family, friends, faith and health), many are taken for granted (the sun rising, the smell of fresh air, the tranquility of a walk in the woods). As this Christmas season is upon us, may peace be in your heart. At your service we remain...

Coffee & Cookies will be served in both North Star offices from Monday, Dec. 22, until Monday, Jan. 5.

Stop in and visit!

Check out our satellite TV systems.

Let us answer your questions and enjoy a cup of coffee on us!

Looking for a great Christmas gift? How about a gift certificate?

Merry Christmas Gift Certificate

for John and Mary Doe

(North Star Electric Cooperative Account # \_\_\_\_\_)

from Mom and Dad

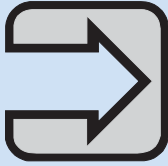
\$100 worth of electricity or DirecTV

Include this certificate with your bill to receive credit

No.96112

Authorized by Ann Ellis

Give a gift that won't sit on a shelf in the back of the closet!



## West End News

By Steve Ellis

Baudette District Operations Supervisor

As the year comes to an end, let's look back to a few changes that have happened in the Baudette Operations Department this last year.

First of all, I would like everyone to know that Don Dostall is now on long-term disability after his knee replacement. He will be missed very much by his fellow employees and the members who could always count on him to help them out at any time of the day or night in any kind of weather. Don was a top-notch lineman and served the members well for many, many years.

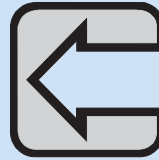
With the departure of Don from our ranks, and an opening that was created earlier by a promotion, we were down to four linemen in our district. To fill these vacancies, we have hired two apprentice linemen graduates. These men worked for us this summer and proved to be just what we were looking for; so to get the crew back to its historic level of six, we hired Dan Dobson and Todd Higgins. Welcome, Dan and Todd, to our ranks. These men, along with the rest of the line department, have one thing on their mind and that would be top-notch service to you, the member. When the lights go out, they will be there to get things up and running for you as quickly, safely and efficiently as possible.

With that, I would like to wish everyone a safe, happy Holiday Season and a great New Year!

## East End News

By Allan Baumgartner

Littlefork District Operations Supervisor



Our crews have most of the new services built for this year and from the looks of the recent weather, winter is here to stay. We may have a few short overhead services yet to take care of, plus a couple of upgrades.

Our crews also worked along with a contractor to install about 20,000 feet of new underground cable out on County Road 30, west of Big Falls. We just finished terminating the new line and getting our members out there switched over onto it. This job went very well considering the late start we got on it this fall.

Looking ahead to next summer, we have a large work plan job to complete plus several new land developments to build power to already on the list.

Outages were minimal for November. Five total, all individual.

## 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**

# Highlights of the board of directors meeting

November 5, 2003

These are the highlights from the board of directors meeting held on November 5, 2003. Detailed minutes are available at the Cooperative for member review. The next regular board meeting is tentatively set for January 7, 2004. 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 accept the annual audit report and to select delegates for 2004.

## Management and operations report

General Manager Hoskins reported on a power cost adjustment option, the IPP (Incremental Pricing Plan) rate available to off-peak commercial loads, strategic planning, changes to the layout of the Littlefork office area, and operations issues including maintenance at the Pitt substation, hiring two apprentice linemen, the progress of the line replacement along the Sturgeon River Road, delivery of the new bucket truck, and two billable outages caused by vehicles with equipment exceeding maximum height levels.

## Office report

Office Manager Ellis provided the financial report and commented further on the budget, NRECA health insurance premiums, the

progress of the FFB loan application, the audit, the restatement of the NRECA Section 125 Plan, and the success of the recent on-line training.

## Compliance and member services report

Manager of Member Services Haukaas reported on summer load control totals of 218 yellow zone hours and 20 red zone hours, conversion plans of many sawmills to switch to the IPP, winter load control hours estimated at 450-700 hours assuming that Schedule L replacement power is available and reasonably priced for 30 percent to 70 percent of time, recent load control due to grid restrictions, the Oct. 29 voltage test to measure ripple receiver signal strength at the substations with North Star's testing satisfactorily, Child ID kits, and the DBS equipment upgrade program and contractor performance.

## Board reports and other discussion

Minnkota Delegate Brzoznowski reported on the monthly Minnkota board meeting. Meeting attendance, a replacement for retired Attorney Brink, and the proposed 2004 Operating Budget were discussed.

## Freeview events for December

Tune to DIRECTV channel #103 and enjoy The Allman Brothers, Pearl Jam Live from Madison Square Garden and U2 Go Home Live from Slane Castle, an exclusive DIRECTV® FREEVIEW® Event, premiering Dec. 1 and will replay throughout December. We are proud to present these concerts to you – at no additional charge – as our way of saying, “Thanks for allowing us to serve 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.

## World Harvest Channel launched Dec. 15.

DIRECTV added the World Harvest Channel to its lineup Dec. 15. Located on DIRECTV channel 321, the World Harvest Network offers family entertainment, news and inspirational programming. World Harvest Network will feature children and adult programs designed to preserve and promote the traditional American value system. The new public interest channel is available free to all DIRECTV subscribers.

## Lost signal?

### Check for snow accumulation



If you own a satellite system and lose your signal during or after a snowstorm, this could be the problem. An accumulation of wet snow will block out, or at least greatly reduce, your signal.

## Equipment upgrades continue for local channels

Equipment upgrades are being completed each week by the contractor that North Star Electric has hired. If you are on the upgrade list and haven't been contacted yet, please be patient, as they have not finished and will be coming to your area again soon. Some customers, such as our seasonal (non-residential) accounts, have been placed on a list to be completed next spring. If the upgrade you have requested is at a cabin or seasonal dwelling, we will place you on that list as well.

What we know so far is that the local Duluth NBC affiliate has signed the contract with DIRECTV to provide the local Duluth channel this winter (February – March time frame). We do not know if the other networks

(ABC/CBS) have done this yet, but our understanding is that it is in the works, so with any luck at all they won't be too far behind NBC in doing this. We sure commend them for all their efforts in this lengthy process and thank you, our valued customers, for your continued patience. (111-03-011-02 Milton L./Janice Peterson) They are quite aware that we are *extremely* anxious to catch up on Minnesota news and I believe they are doing their best to expedite the process.

## WINK Communications service ending

WINK Communications has announced that it does not intend to continue services with DIRECTV effective Dec. 22, 2003. We were very disappointed to hear this news. For those of you that aren't familiar with or aware of it, WINK is an

interactive service that DIRECTV provided at no additional charge to customers and was available on a variety of channels including Headline News, E! Entertainment Television and SHOPNBC.com. Currently, The Weather Channel and sports coverage (ESPN) are the most popular and commonly used WINK services.

We have heard that DIRECTV is exploring other interactive services to provide in the future. But in the meantime, if you'd like to contribute your input on this issue, you can e-mail your concerns to Bradley Smith at [bsmith@nrtc.org](mailto:bsmith@nrtc.org). Your concerns will be forwarded on to DIRECTV officials as they discuss the issue further. We do encourage you to do this, as it is the only way to make your voice heard on this matter and possibly make a difference in their decision making.

## RCA Satellite System & Phase 3 Antenna

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

**Installed for only \$49.99**

(Save over \$350 from our regular price.)

*Christmas Special*

*Christmas Special*

### ADD UP YOUR SAVINGS:

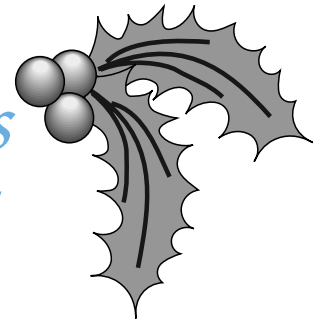
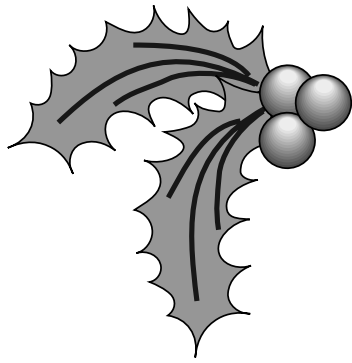
	<u>VALUE</u>	<u>SALE</u>
**RCA System-Antenna	\$259.00	\$ 49.99
Basic Installation	95.00	FREE
Surge Protector	20.00	FREE
1 Month Total Choice Plus	37.99	FREE
	<u>\$411.99</u>	<u>\$ 49.99</u>

- 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.
  - 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 \$139**

**(Free basic installation & programming is only \$1.95 a month)**

*From all of us to all of you..*



*A Very Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year!*

**Board Members**

Steve Arnesen, President (District 1)  
 Gunder Hallan, Vice-President (District 8)  
 Mike Hanson, Secretary-Treasurer (District 4)  
 Julian Brzoznowski (District 9)  
 Mike Trueman (District 2)  
 Bruce Polkinghorne (District 7)  
 James Palm (District 5)  
 Allan Nygaard (District 6)  
 Randy Bergan (District 3)

Employee	Position	Date of Full-Time Hire	Employee	Position	Date of Full-Time Hire
Dan Hoskins	General Manager	7-23-02	<b>Compliance &amp; Member Services</b>		
<b>Office Personnel</b>			Wayne Haukaas	Mgr. of Compliance & Member Services (B)	11-14-88
Ann Ellis	Office Manager (B)	10-17-77	Steve Polkinghorne	Member Service Advisor (L)	7-1-82
Steve Anderson	Draftsman/Purchasing Agent (B)	12-11-69	Kevin Holen	Member Service Advisor (B)	5-6-96
Betty Jo Berg	Bookkeeping Coordinator (B)	4-3-78	Walt Scribner	Member Service Advisor (B)	8-16-99
Patsy Olson	Billing Coordinator (B)	1-1-87	<b>Line Crew</b>		
Lynette Dostall	Receptionist/Cashier (B)	2-1-87	Allan Baumgartner	Operations Supervisor (L)	7-1-76
Kathy Hull	Work Order Clerk (B)	3-1-89	Steve Ellis	Operations Supervisor (B)	6-25-79
Susan Williams	Supervisor District Office (L)	4-4-90	Bruce Petersen	Line Foreman (L)	6-27-78
Cathy Norquist	DBS Customer Service Rep (B)	7-7-95	Jim Levasseur	Lineman (B)	10-9-72
Norma Anderson	Capital Credits & Billing Clerk (B)	1-1-03	Ron Lee	Line Sub-Foreman (L)	7-1-82
Lyra Burmeister	Part-time Receptionist/DBS Clerk (L)		Gary Hull	Line Sub-Foreman (B)	7-1-82
Carolyn Mastin	Part-time Receptionist/DBS Clerk (L)		Marty Mollberg	Line Foreman (B)	8-16-88
			Todd Thydean	Lead Lineman (L)	9-12-88
			Tim Pelach	Lead Lineman (B)	5-6-91
			Rich Grotberg	Lineman (L)	7-1-96
			Glen Marcotte	Lineman (L)	7-15-02
			Dan Dobson	Apprentice Lineman (B)	11-05-03
			Todd Higgins	Apprentice Lineman (B)	11-05-03

*(B) signifies Baudette and (L) signifies Littlefork*

