

The

Enlightener



North Star
Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



VOLUME 50 NUMBER 12

BAUDETTE, MINNESOTA

DECEMBER 2005

Questions on load control?

Check it out on the Internet. Visit Minnkota's Web site: 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 the lower left hand corner of 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 (short-term heat control, water heaters and grain dryers) are for 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
L O A D	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
G R O U P	2.02	ON	ON	ON	OFF	OFF	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	OFF	OFF	ON
	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
U N I T	3.01	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
	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
	6.01	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON



*North Star
offices will
be closed*

**Friday, Dec. 23,
and
Monday, Dec. 26,
for Christmas
and
Jan. 2 for New Year's**

December 2005
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Baudette, MN 56623

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\$1/year for non-members

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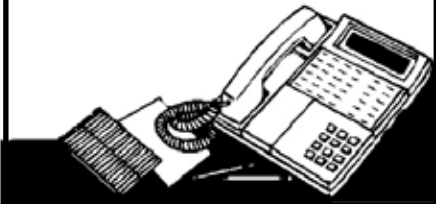
If calling long distance,
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Baudette 888-634-2202
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Monday through Friday

e-mail us at nsec@wiktel.com
Visit our Web site at
www.northstarelectric.coop
P.O. Box 719, Baudette

**Electrical
after-hours
emergencies
1-888-6OUTAGE
(1-888-668-8243)
634-2603**



October 2005

Operating Report

Revenue	\$ 623,074
Cost of Power	\$ 308,281
Operation, Maintenance, Administration	\$ 233,860
Depreciation and Interest	\$ 171,310
Margin on Operations	\$ (90,377)
Average use per Residential.....	1,164
Total kWhs Sold	7,410,984

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 527 hours. The years of 20 to 40 hours of control are gone. This year, Minnkota Power Cooperative estimates 400 to 600 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 25th of EACH month as possible. We must have your reading by the 5th 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

A time to give thanks

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving, and we're hoping that you have a very Merry Christmas. You know, Thanksgiving and Christmas are two of my most favorite times of the year. Take Thanksgiving for instance, share your home with family and friends and enjoy so many good meals and then count the blessings that you are thankful for, like your health, your family and your friends. I have always told my kids to just remember, as bad as you think you may have it, there are others who have it worse.

Reason for the season

Now, let's look at Christmas. Christmas is a time that shouldn't need any explanation, because we all know that Jesus is the reason for the season. The season also brings joy and glad tidings, goodness and giving, friendship and love, and the lights around the Christmas trees. Don't forget the decorations out on the lawns and the thought of the Jolly Old Man, Santa Claus, arriving

on Christmas Eve, bringing smiles and sparkles to our children's eyes.

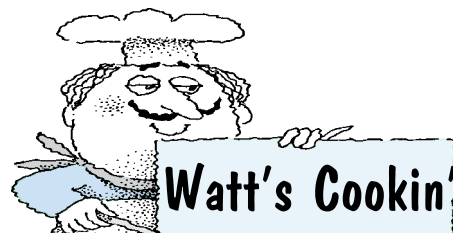
To be thankful for

So, when we talk of these two special holidays, we find that we all have things to be thankful for and the many ways that North Star Electric can help you in fulfilling your holiday needs. For instance, how about that dependable electricity that cooked that wonderful meal that you prepared for your loved ones and friends at Thanksgiving time, or the off-peak electric heat that warms the house at a low cost as the wind howls outside, or the electricity that works the lights in your home as you play games or gives you the ability to watch your favorite program on TV or listen to the stereo?

Making it possible

How about all the beautiful lawn decorations and lights that we see while we are driving around that our neighbors and friends have put up for the holidays? Electricity makes this possible, and your Cooperative is proud and thankful

Continued on page 6



Joan's Garlic Chicken

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) margarine
- 1/2 tsp. minced garlic
- 1/2 cup flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
- 4 boneless split breast chicken pieces

Preheat oven to 375°. Cut margarine in chunks. Put in a 9" x 13" pan and let melt in oven. Remove pan and mix in the minced garlic. Coat chicken pieces with the melted margarine and garlic mixture; then roll in flour mixture and again in margarine and minced garlic. Bake for about 45 minutes.

This recipe was selected for publication in *Capper's Weekly*.

Submitted by:
Joan Nesmith
Williams, Minn.

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.

- *St. Louis county:*
Lee Herseth
10078 Gappa Road
Ray, MN 56669
Phone: (218) 875-3028
7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)
- *Roseau, Lake of the Woods and Koochiching counties:*
William Crunden
29513 Corlan Dr. N.E.
Blackduck, MN 56630
Phone: (218) 835-8567
7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

Gopher State One Call



It's the LAW
CALL BEFORE YOU DIG
Minnesota Statewide One Call
Notification Center
1-800-252-1166



Office notes

From Ann Ellis, Manager of Finance and Administration

“Riches consist not in the extent of possessions, but in the fewness of wants.”

~ J. Brotherton

Last month I took up a whole page of the *Enlightener*, so this month I'll keep it brief.

Easing the pressure

As I sit at my computer contemplating what you might want to know about your cooperative, I am nervously waiting for the weather to improve. Ice is building up on our power lines and poles from Warroad to Orr. It has already brought four of Minnkota's transmission lines out of service. If a fifth line goes down, a blackout could occur. Minnkota is controlling off-peak loads to ease the pressure on the remaining transmission resources.

A local perspective

From a local perspective, if we avoid the blackout situation, what might happen to our own electrical distribu-

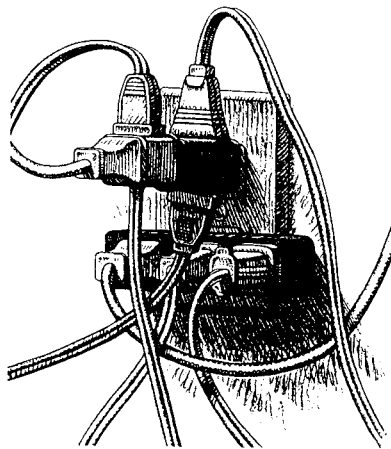
tion system? With a thousand miles of overhead lines out there getting heavier by the minute and more susceptible to wind damage, our 11 lineworkers stand by, ready to face the elements, so your power is as reliable as possible.

I hope that my nervousness turns to relief by morning, because ice storms are not only inconvenient, they can also be very expensive. (Brian/Karen Hoffman 251-26-004-04) But if the worst happens, rest assured that we'll be doing our best to serve your needs.

As the Christmas season is approaching, I hope that you are remembering the reason for the season. Much joy and prosperity, I wish to you and your family in the coming year.

At your service we remain. . .

Play it safe and stick around for Christmas!



Indoors

Here's an accident waiting to happen. A standard wall outlet designed for two plugs, totally overloaded. It's an all-too-common event around Christmas time. Overloading can result in electrical shorts, power outages, fires and personal injury, all of which are easily avoidable. The best rule is to use only one plug per outlet, and a little common sense. And remember that with every plug you add, you're increasing your chance of an accident.

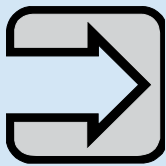
Outdoors

Don't touch or go near fallen electrical wires! Don't touch anything that the wire touches (like a car). Call the Cooperative right away!

North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc. Mission Statement

To improve the lives of our member-owners and community by responsibly providing electric energy and other beneficial services while maintaining the very highest standards of performance.





West End News

By Steve Ellis
Baudette District Operations Supervisor



In this part of the world, we see our fair share of Mother Nature's extremes with wind, rain, snow, ice, cold, etc. As always, I worry about the safety and comfort of our members. Please remember that we, at your Cooperative, are doing our best to serve you with high-quality and dependable service, but sometimes, when the extremes show up, we cannot always have things as we wish we could. Some situations are out of our control, so don't get caught up in the feeling that everything will always be back on in a little bit. Always have a backup plan for your safety.

This is not to alarm you; it is to make you think about what you would do if your power was lost for a day or even a week.

We are gearing up for the AMR (automated meter reading) metering on the rest of our system. Meters will be changed out during the annual line inspection this fall and winter; our goal is to have all meters reporting to us by the end of 2006.

Our crews will be coming to your door, if you are an off-peak user, to change out your off-peak meter. (Debra Nash 665-01-009-05) We appreciate your cooperation in this project as we will need to change all meters before the system can be fully utilized. Added trips will only add to the cost of the changeover. Thank you for your help.

New service plans, anyone? If you plan on building, or just simply need to upgrade your existing service, please contact us well in advance so that your project may be scheduled in our work plans.

Please be careful around overhead lines, as they are very dangerous when working around them. Always keep their presence in mind; if you see or have any questions about your power lines, contact us for help.

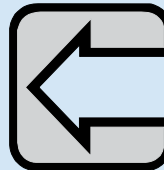
Until next time, stay safe!

Happy Holidays to everyone!



East End News

By Allan Baumgartner
Littlefork District Operations Supervisor



This past month, our crews have worked on our work plan jobs at Pelland Junction and our International Falls substation. The Pelland Junction job is energized and finished, but we still have work to do at the International Falls substation. November was a busy month for new services. Our crews built nine new services, and four of those were in three large development areas.

The crew changed out all of our meters to the new automated meter reading (AMR) ones on the Rainy Lake islands. We will be working on the rest of our system this winter when more AMR meters come in. There will also be some work on our substations and power lines before we will be up and running in the International Falls, Littlefork and Big Falls areas.

We will need to put some much-needed time into right-of-way clearing and pole changeouts this winter. We have about 45 poles to change out, along with right-of-way clearing that is always a never-ending job.

We had nine outages in November; high winds on October 9 caused three of them. This year, we had our share of lightning and windstorms in our areas. If you notice anything different with your overhead service this winter, please call our office, and we will go out to check on it.

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

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for this. (Stephen M. Humeniuk 362-19-006-01) Proud because our employees work hard to bring this product to your switch for your comfort and pleasure, thankful, for our members, that utilize our product in so many ways.

List of thanks

In closing, I would like to give you a few things on my very large list of thanks – the employees that are dedicated and are always working with the best interest of you, our members, in mind, our directors that fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities to you and your Cooperative, and I am thankful for you, our members, for your understanding, thoughtfulness and concern.

So, as we close out 2005, I would like to tell all of you, that all of us here at North Star Electric, appreciate each and every one of you, our members, and thank you for this past year. On behalf of the employees, the directors and myself, we would all like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year in 2006.

God Bless you and our Troops,
Dan

De-icing products

What can you do to keep your driveway clean and clear this winter?

Three common de-icing products are sodium chloride, or rock salt, potassium chloride and calcium chloride.

Rock salt is the least expensive, but doesn't work well in the cold. Calcium chloride is the most expensive and works in much lower temperatures.

Experts say it's a good idea to liberally sprinkle your driveway and sidewalks with a de-icer before a freeze. It's also a good idea to keep sand or kitty litter around for better traction when pulling out of the driveway.

*Neither rain,
nor snow,
nor the dark*



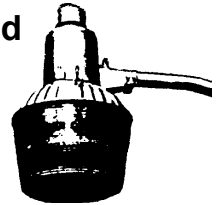
Electric co-op line workers are trained to deal with any power emergency. But there's one thing that can't be taught – dedication.

Dedication to duty is a quality line workers are born with. That's why you'll see them in a driving storm repairing downed power lines. That's why your power is restored in the middle of the night.

That's why they decided to be line workers in the first place. And they expect no special awards or recognition.

It's reward enough for them to know your family is safe and warm – regardless of the weather.

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).

❄️ Snowmobilers ❄️

Beware of hazards! Respect property rights!

As snowmobiling becomes more popular, the number of accidents are increasing. Very few accidents occur on Minnesota's trail system. Most accidents occur along roads and ditches. Obstacles encountered along roads and other cleared rights of way can be very dangerous, especially in low visibility conditions.

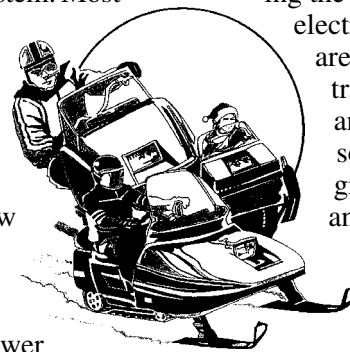
North Star Electric Cooperative and the other Minnkota Power Cooperative-associated systems have poles, guy wires, metal enclosures and pedestals installed on hundreds of miles of rights of way. When snowmobiling, be aware of these obstacles. Guy wires need spe-

cial attention as they can be difficult to see.

Some snowmobilers are mistaking the private property where electric transmission lines are located for snowmobile trails. North Star Electric and the other Minnkota-associated systems have been granted easements to build and maintain lines in these cleared areas, but the land still belongs to the landowner. Be sure to check with the landown-

ers before snowmobiling on their property.

Enjoy snowmobiling in Minnesota, but keep safety in mind. Slow down, don't drink and stay alert for obstacles.



Highlights of the board of directors meeting

November 2, 2005

These are the highlights from the board of directors meeting held on November 2, 2005. Detailed minutes are available at the Cooperative for member review. Regular board meetings are generally 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 accept the audit report, to increase all off-peak rates by \$.003 effective 12-25-05, and to thank the employees and management for a job well done at the Annual Meeting.

Management and operations report

Manager Hoskins reported that a recent coordination of the AMR (automated meter reading) system with a Minnkota load control test identified some off-peak loads that did not appear to be controlled. These accounts will be closely checked to ensure that everything is working and billed appropriately. He also reported that the AMR meters for the rest of the system have been ordered. The load forecast, prepared through Minnkota Power, was reviewed. Reports from the Operations Department were also reviewed.

Office report

Finance Manager Ellis provided the financial report and reported on office activities including conversion to using AMR (automated meter readings) to bill members in the two test substations (Wheelers Point and Kabetogama), member feedback to the rate align-

ment that will become effective 12-25-05, and a question regarding early, discounted payment of DBS capital credits to estates. Because capital credit allocations will accumulate for all former DBS subscribers over the next seven years as payments for the sale are received, she recommended that early payments for DBS capital credits not be considered until all of the allocation has been completed, and the board agreed. She also provided a detailed presentation of the 2006 Operating Budget.

Compliance and member services report

Manager of Compliance and Member Services Haukaas reported on load control, an increased share of power at the Young 2 plant coming Minnkota's way, the AMR reporting coordinated with a Minnkota Power test, Minnkota's ripple receiver voltage testing to ensure that strong enough signals reach throughout our system to activate the switching, the predicted load control hours coming down to 400-600 hours with the additional revenue gained to purchase some more replacement power, continuation of the project to move all water heaters from the off-peak meters to a monthly ECC credit, the passing on of the increased cost of the commercial IPP option, Operation Round-Up, the Annual Meeting and electrical items for the building.

Board reports

Minnkota Delegate Arnesen reported on the Minnkota board meeting including the proposed coal-fired Young 3 power plant. Final approval is anticipated in 2008 with the plant being operational by 2015. Director Bergan reported on the NRECA Capital Credits course he attended, noting that the method that the North Star board has been approving is on target.

Reliable backup systems a must

Because increased load control hours are predicted in the future, electric off-peak heating installations must be capable of 600 hours or more of interruption each winter season.

"In order to realize the full benefits of the load management program, it is very important that our members work with a qualified heating contractor to ensure that they have an automatic, adequate and well-maintained backup heating system," said Wayne Haukaas, manager of compliance and member services.

The electric off-peak heating program continues to provide great value to members today, just as it did when it was first utilized in the late 1970s. The winter heating season is here, and North Star Electric stands ready to assist our members with their electric home heating options.

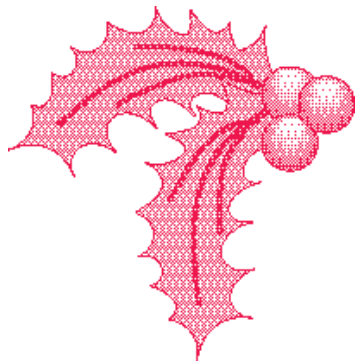


Share a favorite recipe with your North Country neighbors!

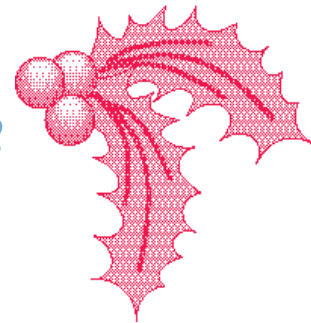
Send to:
North Star Electric
Cooperative, Inc.
Attn: The Enlightener
P.O. Box 719
Baudette, MN 56623



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 5)
 Julian Brzoznowski (District 9)
 Mike Trueman (District 2)
 Bruce Polkinghorne (District 7)
 L.J. Anderson (District 4)
 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	Wayne Haukaas	Manager of Compliance & Member Services (B)	11-14-88
Office Personnel			Steve Polkinghorne	Member Service Advisor (L)	7-1-82
Ann Ellis	Manager of Finance and Administration (B)	10-17-77	Kevin Holen	Member Service Electrician (B)	5-6-96
Betty Jo Berg	Bookkeeper/Asst. Office Manager (B)	4-3-78	Jim Kuehl	Part-time Groundskeeper/Handyman (B)	
Patsy Olson	Billing Coordinator (B)	1-1-87	Line Crew		
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	Jim Levasseur	Lineman (B)	10-9-72
Norma Anderson	Capital Credits & Billing Clerk (B)	1-1-03	Bruce Petersen	Line Foreman (L)	6-27-78
Brad Dolinski	Purchasing Agent/CAD Draftsman (B)	4-11-05	Ron Lee	Line Sub-Foreman (L)	7-1-82
Carolyn Mastin	Part-time Receptionist (L)		Gary Hull	Line Sub-Foreman (B)	7-1-82
			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
			Matt Brown	Apprentice Lineman (L)	12-16-04

(B) signifies Baudette and (L) signifies Littlefork

