



We are offering all North Star Electric members an exceptional summer opportunity that's fun for all ages. This year's power plant tour is three days, which will make the trip more relaxing.

The tour is scheduled for Monday through Wednesday, June 25-27. The first day, we will tour Minnkota Power's control center and diesel generating plant at Grand Forks, and then it's off to the beautiful Seven Seas Hotel & Waterpark in Mandan, N.D.

On the second day, we will visit the Milton R. Young Station near Center, N.D., where most of our electricity is generated. This will include a tour of the open pit mines, where machines strip

the coal and reclaim the land so it can be reused for agriculture. This is where we will see the huge electric dragline, Liberty, with its 300-foot boom and 70-cubic-yard bucket, which is used to remove the overburden soil from the coal. Then, it's off to see the Garrison Dam and a tour of the hydroelectric plant. We will end our day by returning to the Seven Seas for supper.

On the third day, we will visit the Ashtabula Wind Energy Center near Lake Ashtabula, where some of our energy is

generated. The wind towers are 250 feet tall with 120-foot blades. After that, we're off to Grand Forks for lunch, and then back home.

Cost to members is just \$100 per person or \$175 per couple, which covers your cost of the bus, hotels, tours and meals. Members who have not been on this trip in the past are encouraged to go.

For further details, contact Wayne Haukaas at 634-2202 or 1-888-634-2202.

In this issue:

Board highlights/Always call before you dig (811)	2
Manager's Report	3
Home electrical safety/Win \$100 in energy credits	4
Minnesota extreme heat law requirements	5
Staff report/Scholarship winners/Energy efficiency tip	6
Problems paying your bill/Co-op Connections Card	7
Be prepared for thunderstorms	8

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 canceled or if you should find that you cannot make the trip. We will send further details prior to departure. Return with check for \$100 per person or \$175 per couple to:

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

Name _____
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zip _____
Phone No. _____

Have you enjoyed a similar trip in the past? No/Yes If yes, what year? _____

MAY 2012

The Enlightener (USPS 024959), Vol. 57, No. 5 is published monthly by North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc., 441 St. Hwy 172 N.W., Baudette, MN 56623-0719. Subscription price \$1/year. Periodicals postage paid at Baudette, MN 56623. POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to The Enlightener, North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 719, Baudette, MN 56623-0719.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President Steve Arnesen
Vice President Bruce Polkinghorne
Secretary-Treasurer Michael Hanson
Directors Julian Brzoznowski, Randy Bergan,
Lorraine Nygaard, Mike Trueman

General Manager. Dan Hoskins
Editor. Wayne Haukaas

Office hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Baudette 218-634-2202 or 888-634-2202
Littlefork 218-278-6658 or 888-258-2008

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

e-mail us at nsec@wiktel.com
Visit our website at
www.northstarelectric.coop

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.*

MEMBERS' CORNER

We added a section called members' corner. What we would like is for members to send in questions about your electric cooperative, and we will answer them for you. Please give us your name and a phone number in case we need to clarify the question, and send them to North Star Electric, PO Box 719, Baudette, MN, 56623, Attn: Wayne.

Highlights from the BOARDROOM

These are the highlights from the board of directors' April 4, 2012, meeting. Board action this month was generally routine, but did include approval of the safety committee meeting minutes. The North Star Electric Co-op employees have worked 430,420 hours without a lost-time accident, which ranks us as a best-performing cooperative.

Staff reports included the financial report. With the milder winter temperatures, the heating requirements were not as high; however, this also shaved down the number of load control hours needed for the off-peak loads, which reduced the need for members to use much of their backup fuel. The debt refinancing has been completed with a savings near \$1,000,000. Pole attachment rates, visits with state legislators, past due seasonal bills, social media, the upcoming mapping conversion, Operation Round Up, the power plant tour for members, scholarship testing information for area high school

seniors, solar power and the open houses coming up on May 17 in Littlefork and May 18 in Baudette were discussed. Reports from the Operations Department were reviewed, including equipment, the low number of outages and related overtime hours and the three-phase meter changeouts, bringing the AMR (automated meter reading) project close to completion. There will be additional savings when the large power meter readings can be done through the AMR system, eliminating the need for monthly on-site visits by the line crew to obtain data.

Reports of recent meetings were provided. 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.

ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked and helps protect you from injury and expense. Safe digging is no accident: always call 811 before you dig.

Visit call811.com for more information.

• • • • 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 and Koochiching counties:

Bob Orgon
10111 Roosevelt Rd. S.E.
Bemidji, MN 56601
Phone: (218) 556-3829
Fax: (218) 333-0451
7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

• Roseau and Lake of the Woods counties:

Scott Stenvik
16409 State Hwy 1 N.W.
Thief River Falls, MN 56701
Phone: (218) 689-5406
7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)



Dan Hoskins
General Manager

Manager's Report

Coming up in June is another historical date, so how about we run with some “did ya knows?” Did ya know that June 14, 1777, in order to establish an official flag for the new nation, (that being this here United States of America), the Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act? This act would require the flag of the United States be made of 13 stripes, alternate red and white and that the union be 13 stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation.

And then did ya know that on Jan. 13, 1794, an act provided for 15 stripes and 15 stars? But then an act on April 4, 1818, provided for 13 stripes and one star for each state, to be added to the flag on the Fourth of July following the admission of each new state. This was signed by President Monroe. Now we shift from acts to executive orders.

Executive order No. 1 concerns the flag. First, an order from President Taft on June 24, 1912, established proportions of the flag and provided for arrangement of the stars in six horizontal rows of eight each, a single point of each star to be upward. Until this executive order there was no order of the stars or proportions of the flag. Consequently, the flags dating before this period sometimes showed unusual arrangements of the stars and odd proportions because these features were left to the discretion of the flag maker. In general, however, straight rows of stars and proportions similar to those later adopted officially were used.

Then President Eisenhower's executive order, dated Jan. 3, 1959, provided for the arrangement of the stars in seven rows of seven stars each, staggered horizontally and vertically.

Finally, another executive order of President Eisenhower, dated Aug. 21, 1959, provided for the arrangement of the stars in nine rows staggered horizontally and 11 rows of stars staggered vertically.

When we view the flag, we think of liberty, freedom and pride. We think of the millions of men and women over the years who fought to keep it upright and to keep it free. We think of the thousands and thousands who gave their lives for this piece of garment that we call OUR flag!

The American flag flies on the moon, sits atop Mount Everest, is hurtling out in space somewhere, stands at our schools, our government buildings and it flies on top of our nation's capitol. It flies for those of us who love our country, respect our country and recognize our flag as our country and it flies in front of your cooperative! The flag is how America signs her name.

Your cooperative board of directors always starts its monthly board meetings with this very catchy phrase that you may recognize: “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

That just goes to show you that your cooperative board of directors and the employees of North Star Electric Cooperative have a great sense of pride, not only in the flag we fly in front of our two offices or the allegiance we pledge to it, but for the integrity, trust, loyalty and the dedication we all put forth in the seven Cooperative principles that guide our service to you.

Voluntary and open membership – Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

Democratic member control – Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

Members' economic participation – Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Autonomy and independence – Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

Education, training, and information – Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

continued on page 4

Steve Arnesen

Electric Hammer Award recipient



At Minnkota Power Cooperative's annual meeting Friday, March 30, Steve Arnesen, board member for District 1, received the Electric Hammer Award. This award recognizes 25 years of service to the electric cooperative industry at North Star Electric Cooperative.

Manager's Report

continued from page 3

Cooperation among cooperatives – Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

Concern for community – While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

In closing, thank you for your patronage and understanding, thank you for giving all of us a chance to serve you, and thank you for being a member of North Star Electric Cooperative. Have a safe and happy Memorial Day.

God bless you, our troops and our veterans, Dan

Win \$100 in energy credits by being a participant in our cost-saving options:

- **ACH/bankdraft** (automatic payment of electric bill from bank account)
- **ebill** (give us your email address so we can send you notification of your bill amount and access to a wealth of information about your bill)
- **paperless statements** (you don't receive a paper copy, but you can print one from the ebill site)

Our goal is to maximize efficiency and eliminate waste. You can help us do this, and to thank you, we will automatically put

all the participating members' names in the drawings and pick a winner from each. If you participate in all three, you will be in all three drawings! If you want to sign up for any/all of the programs so you will be included in the drawings, just contact us before June 29. Thank you for your help in making the utility you own run as effectively as possible.

Hint: we don't have many members signed up for paperless statements, so your odds to win that \$100 will be really good!

The value is electric!

One tank of gas for your car
20 gallons at \$3.76/gallon = **\$75.20**

More than 21 days of electricity
for your entire home = **\$75.20***

*Based on North Star Electric average residential usage of 875 kWh per month at the residential rate of \$.113/kWh + Minnkota surcharge of \$.003/kWh

Operation Round Up application deadline is May 31

The deadline to submit Operation Round Up grant applications is May 31. Community organizations may apply for an Operation Round Up grant by completing and returning an application form, available at either North Star office or from a director of the North Star Electric Community Trust Board. The directors are Pete Granger, Gretchen Thompson, Margie Sporlein, Zelpha Crawford, Mary Ellen Lehman, Julie Lepisto and Sande Moyer.

Grants will be awarded to nonprofit or community-based organizations that demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the quality of life in our region. We would like to say THANK YOU to all the North Star members who are participating in the Operation Round Up program. About 80 percent of the membership is contributing to this great cause to help our local communities.

Home *electrical* Safety

*May is National
Electrical Safety Month*

Minor improvements to the home provide major safety benefits



North Star Electric Cooperative is joining with the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) to raise awareness about potential home electrical hazards and the importance of electrical safety (121-19-008-09, David Torkelson).

In addition to the overarching campaign theme of emerging technologies and the electrical hazards associated with them, ESFI reminds consumers about the importance of home safety devices that provide safety enhancements without requiring major renovations. These devices include arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs), ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and tamper resistant receptacles (TRRs).

Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs)

AFCIs replace standard circuit breakers in the home's electrical service panel and provide a higher level of electrical fire protection by detecting hazardous arcing conditions and shutting down the electricity before a fire can start.

While AFCIs were originally only required to protect bedroom circuits, the 2011 National Electrical Code (NEC) requires that this technology be installed in additional areas of the home, including dining rooms and living rooms.

Although the new safety requirements apply to newly constructed homes, older homes with aging wiring systems can also benefit from the added protection provided by AFCIs.

AFCIs should only be installed or replaced by a licensed, qualified electrician. AFCIs must be tested monthly to ensure they are working properly.



Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)

A GFCI is a device designed to protect people from shock and electrocution.

GFCIs constantly monitor electricity flowing in a circuit, and quickly switch off power if they sense any loss of current.

GFCIs could prevent over two-thirds of home electrocutions that occur each year according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

GFCIs can be installed at the main service panel, in place of standard electrical outlets, or can be used as a portable device.

Typically, GFCIs are installed in areas where water and electricity are in close proximity, such as the bathroom, garage, kitchen and basement.

GFCIs should be tested monthly, as they can be damaged as a result of voltage surges from lightning, utility switching or normal usage.

While GFCIs should be installed by a licensed electrician, portable GFCIs require no tools to install.



Tamper Resistant Receptacles (TRRs)

TRRs look just like ordinary outlets, but are designed with spring-loaded receptacle cover plates that close off the receptacle openings or slots.

When equal pressure is simultaneously applied to both sides, the receptacle cover

plates open to allow the standard plug to make contact with the receptacle contact points.

Without simultaneous pressure, the cover plates remain closed, preventing insertion of foreign objects and protecting your children from painful, traumatic electrical injuries.

Every year in the United States, more than 2,400 children under 10 years old are treated in hospital emergency rooms for electric shock or burns caused by tampering with a wall outlet, which could be prevented by installing TRRs in the home.

Tamper resistant receptacles have proven to be so effective that the 2011 NEC requires installation of TRRs in all new homes.

TRRs should be installed by a licensed, qualified electrician.



The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May to increase public awareness of the electrical hazards around us at home, work, school, and play. ESFI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety. For more information about ESFI and electrical safety, visit www.electrical-safety.org.

Staff Report

We have been and will be working on our 2012 work plan

Steve Ellis
Baudette District
Operations Supervisor



projects. These jobs will be in the Birch Beach to the Sandy Shores area north of Williams and north of Baudette in the Wabanica area. A contractor will be hired to assist on these rebuilds. We will be upgrading these single-phase lines to three-phase lines with taller poles and larger conductors. This will allow us to better serve the growing load in these areas as well as upgrade old equipment to new. We would like to thank all of the members along these sections of line who have cooperated with us during these rebuilds.

Lakes States Construction has completed the project between Baudette and Border. They will be doing the final clean-up this spring and North Star will be finishing the guy wire and anchors in the right of way as soon as the Highway 11 road construction is completed by MnDOT.

With pole inspections in the Williams substation area this past summer, we ended up with more than 300 poles that need to be replaced. The crews have been working this winter on replacing these poles and at this time they have replaced 250 of them.

Annual line inspection has been finished and crews will be repairing problems found on the entire system. So, if you see one of our trucks in your yard, this is likely what they are up to (556-44-105-07, Duane Street).

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 your project may be scheduled in our work plans.

GSOC (Gopher State One-Call) ... If you plan to do any digging, please remember it is the law that you MUST contact GSOC before you dig. The ground is crawling with more than worms; it is full of wires and cables of all kinds! To save yourself, and most likely many others, and the inconvenience and cost of a dig in, please plan your project well in advance, and notify GSOC first! ... Call 811. Until next time, stay safe!

Scholarship Winners

FIRST PLACE		SCORE
Garrett Larson	Littlefork/Big Falls	97%
SECOND PLACE		
Douglas Potts	Lake of the Woods	95%
Elizabeth Gearhart	International Falls	95%
Cody Anderson	Littlefork/Big Falls	93%
Victoria Lien (tie)	Warroad	91%
Justin Anderson (tie)	Roseau	91%
Therese Youso (tie)	International Falls	91%
Austin Burmeister (tie)	Littlefork/Big Falls	91%

Congratulations to this year's winners!

North Star would like to thank all the students who took the time to study and take the test, which was about North Star Electric and rural electric cooperatives. The students who took the test were: Warroad – Megan Olsonawski, Justin Anderson, Victoria Lien and Brady Wilmer; Lake of the Woods – Douglas Potts, Alicia Beckel, Ashley Krohn, Ally Moeller, Laura Ellis, Aaron O'Connell, Dyson Dahl, Kendra Krause and Bryan Hasbargen; Indus – Grant Erickson, Ginger Freden, Gary Hultman and Neil Westover Jr; Littlefork/Big Falls – Garrett Larson, Cody Anderson, Austin Burmeister, Hannah McClellan, Cody Burmeister, Paige DeLack, Cassy Hawkinson, Mich Nelson, Anna Maelischka, Jeffery Fry, Kailyn Ballard, Tyler Vork and James Meyer; International Falls – Elizabeth Gearhart, Therese Youso, Tyler House and Aleena Wilson; North Wood – Thomas Sather. These scholarships were made possible from funding of unclaimed capital credits.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH



Smart home landscaping can lower your electric bills. Trees on the east and west sides of your home provide shade — and reduce your cooling costs — during hot summer months. Shade for your air conditioner can save 10 percent of your cooling costs. And by adding vegetation to the north side of your home, you can reduce winter winds that trigger higher heating costs. Find more ways to save at **TogetherWeSave.com**. Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives



North Star Electric
will be closed
Monday, May 28,
in observance of
Memorial Day
Please remember those who
sacrificed their lives for our
freedom.

North Star Electric Cooperative's
**Co-op
 Connections Card**
is revitalized

Here are a few of the businesses participating in the Co-op Card. See more online at www.nse.coop or www.connections.coop

- **Streiff Floral** (I'Falls)
- **Wigwam Resort** (Baudette)
- **Voyageur Motel** (I'Falls)
- **Polkinghorne's Hardware & Rental** (Littlefork)

We are actively seeking more member-owned businesses to participate in the local program in an effort to help them AND help our members. Contact North Star Electric Co-op for more information.



**Co-op Connections Card
 Business Spotlight**

Salon 71

4439 Highway 71
 Littlefork, MN 56653

Show your Co-op Card and save
20% OFF all hair care products

Phone: 218-278-4108



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
 Social Services**

206 8th Ave. SE, Suite 200
 Baudette, MN 56623
 634-2642

**Northwest Community
 Action Council**

P.O. Box 67
 Badger, MN 56714-0067
 800-568-5329

**Koochiching County
 Community Services**

1000 5th St.
 International Falls, MN 56649
 283-7000

**Kootasca Community
 Action, Inc.**

2232 2nd Ave. E.
 P.O. Box 44
 International Falls, MN 56649
 283-9491 or 800-559-9491

**Kootasca Community
 Action, Inc.**

1213 SE 2nd Ave.
 Grand Rapids, MN 55744-3984
 800-422-0312

**Arrowhead Economic
 Opportunity Agency**

702 3rd Ave. S.
 Virginia, MN 55792-2797
 800-662-5711

NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE POLITICAL LEADERS

Federal legislators

Senator Al Franken

309 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510
www.franken.senate.gov
 202-224-5641
 Fax: 202-224-0044

Senator Amy Klobuchar

302 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510
www.klobuchar.senate.gov
 202-224-3244
 1-888-224-9043 (Minnesota office)
 Fax: 202-228-2186

Congressman Chip Cravaack

508 Cannon House Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20515
www.cravaack.house.gov
 202-225-6211
 Fax: 202-225-0699

Congressman Collin Peterson

2211 Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20515
www.collinpeterson.house.gov
 202-225-2165
 Fax: 202-225-1593

State of Minnesota legislators

Senator Tom Bakk

75 Rev. Dr. Martin
 Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 Capitol Building, Room 147
 St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
 651-296-8881
sen.tom.bakk@senate.mn

Senator Tom Saxhaug

75 Rev. Dr. Martin
 Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 Capitol Building, Room 135
 St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
 651-296-4136
sen.tom.saxhaug@senate.mn

Senator LeRoy Stumpf

75 Rev. Dr. Martin
 Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 Capitol Building, Room 145
 St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
 651-296-8660
sen.leroy.stumpf@senate.mn

Representative Tom Anzelc

307 State Office Building
 100 Rev. Dr. Martin
 Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 St. Paul, MN 55155

651-296-4936

rep.tom.anzelc@house.mn

Representative David Dill

273 State Office Building
 100 Rev. Dr. Martin
 Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 St. Paul, MN 55155
 651-296-2190
 800-339-0466
rep.david.dill@house.mn

Representative Dan Fabian

431 State Office Building
 100 Rev. Dr. Martin
 Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 St. Paul, MN 55155
 651-296-9635
rep.dan.fabian@house.mn

Representative Tom Rukavina

303 State Office Building
 100 Rev. Dr. Martin
 Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 St. Paul, MN 55155
 651-296-0170
 888-682-3205
rep.tom.rukavina@house.mn

Be prepared for Thunderstorms



While a thunderstorm is only about 15 miles in diameter and lasts around 30 minutes, it can wreak havoc on communities, so it pays to keep an ear to the forecast and an eye to the sky to know when one of these potentially devastating storms might blow through your area.

Thunderstorms can produce lightning, flash floods, hail, straight-line winds and tornadoes — all of which can be deadly and lead to hundreds of millions of dollars of property damage every year in the United States.

BEFORE THE STORM

“Steps you take now can keep you safe during a severe storm,” says Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council. “Know the difference between a severe thunderstorm watch and warning. A watch means there is the possibility of storms in your area. A warning means a storm has been reported or is imminent and you should take cover.”

The National Weather Service offers these tips to make sure you are prepared for spring and summer storms:

- Assemble necessary supplies for a potential outage (for a suggested list, visit SafeElectricity.org);
- Check the forecast and the hazardous weather outlook;
- Watch for signs of an approaching storm;
- If a storm is approaching, turn on a weather radio or an AM/FM radio for information;
- If a storm is imminent, stay inside until it passes.

If you find yourself outdoors during a storm, remember that if you can hear thunder, you are close enough to a storm to be struck by lightning. If possible, get inside or into a hard top vehicle — not a convertible. If safe shelter is not available, find a low spot away from trees, fences and poles. If you are indoors when a storm

strikes, stay away from windows, and go to the lowest level of your home. Unplug unnecessary appliances, and do not use corded phones. Cordless and cellular phones are safe (795-06-030-03, Harold Becker).

AFTER THE STORM

Once the storm has passed, it does not mean the danger has. Hall cautions, “There could be a variety of hazards left by the severe weather. Keep yourself and your family safe by being aware of the dangers after the storm.”

DO NOT touch downed power lines or objects in contact with those lines. There is no way to know if that line is energized. A downed power line does not have to be arcing or smoking to be deadly. Stay away from the line, and warn others to do the same. If you come across downed power lines, call 911 and your utility immediately.

The National Weather Service suggests other things to consider after the storm:

- If you are inspecting your home in the dark, use a flashlight rather than a candle or some other open flame to avoid the risk of fire or explosion due to a gas leak;
- If you see frayed wiring or sparks or if there is an odor of something burning, shut off the electrical system at the main circuit breaker if you know how and can do so safely;
- If you smell gas or suspect a leak, open windows in the home, if you can do so safely, and then get out of the house. If the smell is strong, leave immediately without touching any switches. Once outside, call 911, and notify your gas utility.

Take steps now to keep your family safe. Get more information at SafeElectricity.org.