

Dan Hoskins
General Manager

MANAGER'S REPORT

Ladies and Gentlemen, let's catch up on a few things. In other words, you get a cup of coffee or a beverage and I'll talk to you for a few minutes. The big news in my family is by the time you get this issue of our *Enlightener*, Sharon and I will be grandparents again. Daughter Brittany and her husband, Scott, are the proud parents (252-12-036-04, Mike Feininger). I will update you in our August issue.

Anyway, the legislative session is over and seems that the political folks got their way (surprise, surprise) and passed an energy bill that is not favorable to the ratepayers when it's all said and done. BUT, now there is a but here, for now, the cooperatives are exempt from the newly passed legislation that includes a solar mandate, energy tax and a net metering change among other things. And this exemption success is due to all the hard work of many cooperative folks throughout the state who I can't even start to name, but there are a couple of folks who I do need to thank. One of those is Stacey Dahl of Minnkota Power Cooperative. Stacey rallied for Minnkota when needed.

Also, right here at home, Ann Ellis, assistant general manager of North Star Electric, was terrific with her new position. After a few years of going to St. Paul a couple times a year, to Washington, D.C., a couple times a year, and with all the new rules and regulations and the need to debate legislative issues, I thought a couple of years ago, I need someone to assist me with this. So, I turned to a very dedicated employee of our own, and I asked Ann if she would be interested in heading up North Star's grassroots program. She was up for the challenge. Since then Ann has done a tremendous job for North Star and our member-owners working with the political folks at St. Paul and Washington, D.C., through letters, emails, phone calls, personal visits and providing you with information on different issues and garnering your help on these issues. So a big Thank You to Ann for her work.

The biggest reason for the success is the work two guys from the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), Joel Johnson, director of government affairs, and Andrew

"AJ" Duerr, legislative representative. These two guys worked tirelessly every day to see that proposed legislation that affects cooperatives of the state is within working limits for us or not at all. Without these two guys, things would be pretty tough down in St. Paul and we would be in a crisis. So, if you don't mind, because of what they do and what they have done (and they make my job easier seeing that this stuff does not get to the legislative floor), and on behalf of our cooperative, our member-owners and employees and directors, I would like to say a very large THANK YOU to Joel and AJ!

Now let's shift gears here and talk about something that I think is vitally important and that is, ready for this, are you sure? I wrote about this a few years ago, but I wanted one more shout out for this terrific event. Every so often the United Blood Services comes to Baudette to stock its blood supply and it was just here not too very long ago. And the folks around here do a great job in participating. Heck sometimes you can't get in, all appointments are full, but what a tremendous offering by all of the local folks. So a big Thank You there also; keep up the good work! There are a lot of folks out there who need this blood and without United Blood Services and all you volunteers, there would be a whole lotta folks in dire straits.

OK, one more shift; this was a long winter and spring took forever in coming and seems like things either snuck up and passed without us knowing or we looked at the calendar and said, "oh my, it's July already!" Anyway, that is what happened to me. Memorial Day came and went and although we did pay our respects and attend a service, I never got to recognize these fallen heroes. They are the ones who paid the ultimate price so we can have the freedom that we enjoy so much. So with that, I pause a minute to pray for those men and women who died so we can live!

God bless you and our troops, Dan

In this issue:

Board highlights/Always call before you dig (811)	2	Nomination process for director election	6
Look up for power lines and stay safe	3	Problems paying your electric bill/Political Leaders	7
Governor Dayton criticizes Minnkota Power	4-5	Prepare your home for your vacation	8

JULY 2013

The Enlightener (USPS 024959), Vol. 58, No. 7 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

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.



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.

Highlights from the BOARDROOM

These are the highlights from the board of directors' May 28, 2013, meeting. In addition to routine action, the board voted to approve Manager Hoskins' attendance at the CFC (Cooperative Finance Corporation) Forum, to approve the IRS 990 tax return, to approve the inventory adjustment and to transfer unpaid final bills in preparation for collection agency activity. They also reviewed the director districts.

Staff reports included the financial report, the loan fund audit, unclaimed capital credits, legislative and grassroots activities, capital credit retirements, load management, distributed generation, high bill questions, Operation Round Up, school safety demonstrations, scholarships, the solar demonstration project, completion of the work plan project to convert overhead to underground in the Wheeler's Point area, new services, the replacement of five miles of underwater cable in

Voyageur's National Park, beginning the other work plan construction projects, outages, safety training, personnel, upcoming meetings and discussions with the city of Warroad regarding its desire to provide electricity to the new casino load located in North Star's service territory. Member concerns were discussed. A report from the Lake Country Power Cooperative annual meeting was given. District 2A Minnesota State Representative Roger Erickson joined the meeting and updated the board on legislative activity after the meeting adjourned.

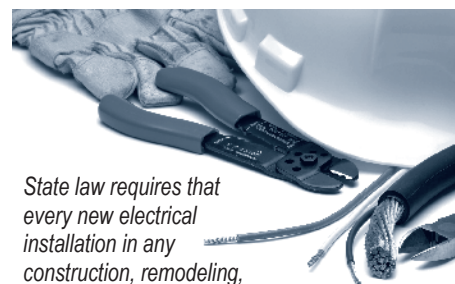
Detailed minutes are available at the cooperative for member review. Regular board meetings are generally held the first Wednesday of every month. If you wish to speak with the board, or have an item that you would like to have placed on the agenda, please contact Manager Dan Hoskins at least two weeks 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 and be inspected by a Minnesota electrical inspector. For more information go to Minnesota Department of Labor and Industries website (dli.mn.gov) and go to the electrical page.



Like us on
Facebook

Find us on Facebook



www.facebook.com/NorthStarElectric

• St. Louis and Koochiching counties:

Chip Jespersen
Phone: (218) 327-5987
Call to set up an appointment between 7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

• Roseau and Lake of the Woods counties:

Scott Stenvik
Phone: (218) 689-5406
Call to set up an appointment between 7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

Look up for power lines and stay safe

Summer is a busy time of year for everyone. When your mind is on other things, it's easy to overlook basic safety concerns. Things we see every day can almost fade from view. In fact, recent studies have found that people's minds likely ignore power lines because they have seen them so often they don't even notice them anymore. But failure to notice high-voltage power lines can be a deadly oversight. As part of the "Teach Learn Care TLC" campaign, Safe Electricity wants to raise awareness about the dangers and precautions to take around power lines.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, hundreds of consumer deaths occur each year from direct or indirect contact with power lines. Electrocution is also the second leading cause of death for utility and construction workers according to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. With so many people distracted at this time of year, Safe Electricity wants to emphasize the importance of electrical safety.

"Often when we undertake outdoor activities, we don't even think about power lines," Molly Hall, executive director of Safe Electricity, said. "Taking a few moments to become aware of your surroundings is a critical step to keeping yourself and your loved ones safe."

Safe Electricity encourages everyone to follow these guidelines as they prepare to work outdoors this year:

- Look up and around you. Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long tools like ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles. Lower your long equipment when you are moving it. Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.
- Be careful when working on or

around your roof, installing rooftop antennas and satellite dishes, doing roof repair work or cleaning gutters. Never go up on the roof in windy or bad weather.

- Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines.
- Never trim trees near power lines – leave that to the professionals. Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines. Contact a professional maintenance contractor.



- Never climb trees near power lines (783-19-033-02, Judith A. Decuellar). Even if the power lines aren't touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.
- If your projects include digging, like building a deck or planting a tree, call your local underground utility locator before you begin. Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. This service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted and can help you avoid serious injury.

Another instance where people often come in contact with power lines is through vehicle crashes. In accidents that bring down power lines, our instincts tell us to flee danger. However, it's almost always best to stay in your vehicle and wait for help. It is especially important to educate

inexperienced teenaged drivers about power line safety who might be driving themselves to and from school and other activities.

Four Indiana teenagers found themselves in this dangerous situation. After colliding with a power pole, a power line fell on the vehicle they were traveling in. Fortunately, some of them had just attended a power line safety demonstration at their high school.

Lee Whittaker, one of the students involved in the crash, credits their survival to timely electrical safety education. "I made sure everyone else

was okay and made sure I was okay. I told them not to get out," Whittaker said. "That was the main thing he had repeated during the program, (you should) not get out of a vehicle if you're in an accident involving power lines."

If you must get out because of fire or another danger, jump clear of the vehicle without touching it and the ground at the same time.

Then hop with feet together – don't run or stride. Electricity spreads out through the ground in ripples, like a stone dropped in water. The voltage is highest in the ring closest to the vehicle and decreases with distance. Hop with feet together so that one foot won't be in a higher voltage zone than the other, which could make you a conductor for electricity!

If you come upon, or witness an accident involving toppled power poles and lines, don't leave your vehicle to approach the accident scene. "Often our inclination is to step in and help those in danger and offer assistance to the injured," Hall said. "However, in accidents involving power poles, the best thing you can do is call for help. Wait for trained assistance to arrive, or you could become an additional victim in need of rescue."

For more information, visit: www.SafeElectricity.org.

Gov. Dayton bashes Minnkota Power and Great River Energy at clean jobs rally

We would like to share with you a short version of Gov. Mark Dayton's speech at <http://www.tubechop.com/watch/1270910> as he addressed a group on Earth Day this year, revealing yet more challenges that our industry is and will face in the near future. This line of challenge comes from our state's highest office during a rally for clean energy jobs.

In case you don't have the Internet to watch the link listed, Gov. Dayton said Minnkota has made some bad investments, buying high-priced wind energy and selling it at a lower cost. He said Minnkota didn't take responsibility for this, but instead blamed the renewable legislation for this "bad investment." The only reason Minnkota got into


wind energy was because of the renewable legislation passed by Minnesota in 2007. Gov. Dayton similarly blasted Great River Energy.

He also states that the goal should be to eliminate all power in Minnesota from coal-fired plants.

Minnkota Power Cooperative President & CEO Mac McLennan sent Gov. Dayton a very well-written letter addressing the displeasure that Minnkota has with these remarks. Below is a copy of Mac's letter.

Letter to Gov. Mark Dayton



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

1822 Mill Road • P.O. Box 13200 • Grand Forks, ND 58208-3200 • Phone (701) 795-4000

June 10, 2013

Honorable Mark Dayton
Governor of Minnesota
130 State Capitol Building
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Dayton,

I had a chance recently to review your comments delivered at the Clean Jobs Rally in St. Paul on April 22 regarding Minnkota Power Cooperative's renewable resources. I would like to respond to your criticisms. I am deeply disappointed at your characterization of our work and accomplishments within the context of renewable resources. At that event you stated, "They [Minnkota] made some bad investments, including some bad investments buying wind at a high price and now they have to sell it at a low price. But they don't admit it was their mistakes that caused that problem, they try to pawn it off on renewables and also set renewables back as a result."

First, we did not buy wind at a high price or make bad investments. Our contracts were competitive at the time they were executed and are also locked in for 25 years, meaning that we have protected our members from escalating costs. With that said, our wind resources remain more expensive than our base resources and are significantly higher than the market.

Further, your statement was both selective and misleading about where we stand in regard to renewable resources. As you should know, Minnkota Power has been honored with national awards for having the highest percentage of retail energy sales powered by wind; we have a system capacity of approximately 32 percent wind energy and another 10 percent hydroelectric power. But rather than tout our standing as a nationwide leader in renewables, you chose to unfairly criticize Minnkota because we disagreed with your solar agenda.

The primary focus of your criticism is that Minnkota made a bad decision to invest heavily in wind energy in a series of purchase power agreements between 2007 and 2009. Minnkota committed to a number of those contracts in order to meet the 25 percent by 2025 renewable energy mandate as signed into law by the State of Minnesota in 2007. At that time, Minnkota entered into those contracts to take advantage of sites with strong wind potential, lower transmission line costs and favorable pricing terms. Certainly almost no one across the country predicted the market crash and the Great Recession that followed. We are still recovering from those conditions, which took a heavy toll on electric prices in the energy market. Further, the vast majority of utilities are losing money on their wind energy, so we are far from alone in that category. The renewable losses in Minnesota alone topped \$70 million last year.

I am surprised that given your administration's strong stance on renewable energy, your office would legitimately argue that Minnkota went to renewable too quickly. Undoubtedly, that argument directly contradicts the advocacy push your office made for a solar mandate and your call to make Minnesota even more renewable-based. The premise of your remarks were that Minnkota pays too much for our current wind contracts, though interestingly, the solar mandate you supported would have cost roughly four times what we pay for our wind energy -- which we would have to sell into the market at an even greater loss than wind. As a Minnesota company, we are extremely proud of what we do at Minnkota Power; we have an unwavering commitment to our member-owners to power some of the most beautiful and hardworking communities in North Dakota and Minnesota. We appreciate the challenges you face and the work that is done in Minnesota, but we also wish to correct the record when the management of our renewable resources is mistakenly represented. I would be happy to answer any questions regarding our renewable program or the work that Minnkota does on behalf of its members.

Respectfully yours,



Mac McLennan
Minnkota President/CEO

Cc: Minnkota Board of Directors
Minnkota System Managers
David Saggau, Great River Energy
Mark Glaess, Minnesota Rural Electric Association
Darryl Tveitbakk, Northern Municipal Power Agency
State Senate and House Members in Minnkota service territory

The North Star Electric Cooperative annual meeting of the members is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 4, at the Littlefork/Big Falls High School. The Board of Directors positions up for election are **District 5 and 6 for a four-year term.**

Your district number is printed on your electric bill. If you are interested in a position on the Board of Directors, you may pick up a petition form at our North Star Electric Cooperative office in either Littlefork or Baudette.

Please be advised that each membership of the North Star Electric Cooperative is allowed one signature, and in the case of joint membership, only one signature is allowed. (A husband and wife are not joint members unless they have completed a joint membership application.)

SECTION 3. QUALIFICATIONS.

All persons eligible to become or remain a director of the Cooperative shall:

(a) be a member in good standing of the Cooperative receiving electric service at the member's primary residence in the district from which the director is to be elected prior to being nominated for director;

For purposes of these bylaws, "primary residence" shall mean the residence that is the chief or main residence of the person and where the person actually lives for the most substantial portion of the year;

(b) have voting rights within the district from which the director is to be elected;

(c) not be employed by, materially affiliated with or have a material financial interest in any director, individual or entity which either is:

(1) directly or substantially competing with the Cooperative; or

(2) selling goods and services in substantial quantity to the Cooperative; or

(3) possessing a substantial conflict of interest with the Cooperative;

For purposes of this section, the terms "material" or "substantially" shall be interpreted

as constituting a minimum of 5 percent of a member's total hours of employment sales or income on an annual basis:

(d) not be an employee or not have been an employee of the Cooperative within the last three (3) years;

(e) not be a close relative of an employee, where as found in these bylaws "close relative"

absences within a twelve (12) month period of time.

Nothing contained in this section shall affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the board of directors.

(i) Exceptions. In regard to the restrictive provisions of this section that are based upon close relative relationships, no incumbent director shall lose eligibility to remain a director or to be re-elected a director if, during a director's incumbency, a director becomes a first kindred relative of another incumbent director or of a Cooperative employee because of a marriage or an adoption to which the director was not a party.

(j) Disqualification. After the Board of Directors determines that a director or a nominee for director lacks eligibility under the provisions of this section or as may be provided elsewhere in these bylaws, it shall be the duty of the board to promptly make a disqualification. After the Board of Directors determines that any person being considered for or already holding a directorship lacks eligibility under this section it shall be the duty of the board of directors to withhold such position from such person or to cause a director to be removed therefrom, as the case may be.

Nomination process for director election

As approved, with a Bylaw amendment by the membership, the Nominating Committees will not be used to identify candidates for director elections. Anyone interested in running for the North Star Electric Cooperative Board of Directors should review the following information from the North Star Electric Cooperative Bylaws Article IV, Board of Directors, Section 3, Qualifications, as well as the new nomination procedure, Article IV, Section 5, Nominations.

means any individual who is, either by blood, law, or marriage, including step, half, foster and adoptive is either a spouse, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, brother or sister.

(f) be only one, and not more than one, member of a joint membership; provided, however, that none shall be eligible to become or remain a director or to hold a position of trust in the Cooperative unless all shall meet the qualifications hereinabove set forth;

(g) if a representative or agent of a member is not a natural person, i.e. a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or similar, then the representative or agent designated as a nominee for director shall be an individual residing within the external boundaries of the district from which (s)he is nominated; and

(h) agree to regularly attend all board, annual and special members' meetings, and in no case have more than four (4) unexcused

SECTION 5. NOMINATIONS.

The procedures and methods of nominating candidates for election as a director of the cooperative are hereby established:

Nominations by Petition. Any twenty (20) or more members of a district of the cooperative may make nominations in writing over their signatures not less than sixty (60) days prior to the annual meeting, and the Secretary of the board of directors shall post the petition at the principal office of the cooperative, Baudette, Minnesota; such listing of nominations by petition may be mailed to each member through the medium of the cooperative newsletter.

Please welcome Jesse Huot, our new journeyman lineman!

Jesse Huot has been hired as a journeyman lineman out of the Baudette office. Jesse is originally from Bemidji, Minn. After graduating from Bemidji High School in 2005, he attended MState electrical line worker school in Wadena, Minn., and graduated in 2006. The first summer after graduation he worked as summer help for Itasca-Mantrap Electric Cooperative as

an apprentice lineman. After that he worked for various companies, Highline Construction from Paynesville, Minn., 1½ years; city of Breckenridge, Minn., 3½ years; and Aevenia Construction by Williston, N.D., 1 year. Last fall Jesse saw that North Star had job openings for two journeyman linemen because one of North Star's lineman had moved, another was promoted and it was in need of help. He had wanted to work for an electric co-op and the time and location was right. Jesse also has a brother who is a lineman for Clearwater-Polk Electric Co-op in Bagley, Minn., and his mother

works for Beltrami Electric Co-op in Bemidji, Minn. Some of his hobbies are hunting, fishing, four-wheeling and snowmobiling.



North Dakota makes American Lung Association Honor Roll

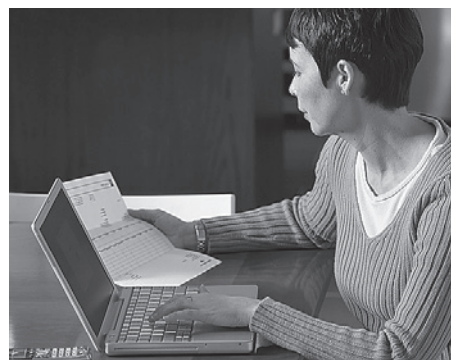


The American Lung Association's "State of the Air" Annual Report for 2013, released on April 24, gave eight North Dakota counties "A" grades for lack of ozone, also known as smog, and three counties "A" grades for lack of particulates, also known as dust.

The eight counties, which are chosen because of major population centers or proximity to national parks and grassland, include Billings, Burke, Burleigh, Cass, Dunn, McKenzie, Mercer

and Oliver (664-19-010-01, Martin A. Steinbach). The last two counties are home to five of the state's seven lignite coal-fired power plants and the nation's only lignite-to-natural-gas synfuels plant.

In addition to the counties, Bismarck was among the top 25 cleanest cities for year-round particulate pollution. Bismarck and Fargo were among the top-ranked cleanest cities for ozone. "North Dakotans breathe some of the cleanest air in the United States, in part because of emissions control technologies at the state's seven coal-based power plants," said Steve Van Dyke, vice president – communications for the Lignite Energy Council. Utilities in North Dakota have invested \$2 billion in technology to protect the environment and spend \$70 million annually to operate it. In the last five years, three of the seven power plants have invested more than \$1 billion in emissions control technologies.



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.

Grand Rapids, MN 55744-3984
Toll free 1-877-687-1163
Direct 1-218-999-0800
Fax 218-999-0220

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

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

NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE POLITICAL LEADERS

Federal legislators

President Barack Obama

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500
www.whitehouse.gov
president@whitehouse.gov
202-456-1111

Senator Al Franken

320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
www.alfranken.com
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 Rick Nolan

2447 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
www.nolan.house.gov
202-225-6211
Facebook: US Rep Rick Nolan
Twitter: @USRepRickNolan

Congressman Collin Peterson

2109 Rayburn House Office
Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
www.collinpeterson.house.gov
202-225-2165
Fax: 202-225-1593

State of Minnesota legislators

Governor Mark Dayton

75 Rev. Dr. Martin
Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol Building, Room 130
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
800-657-3717
mark.dayton@state.mn.us

Senator Tom Bakk

75 Rev. Dr. Martin
Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol Building, Room 226
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
651-296-8881
sen.tom.bakk@senate.mn

Senator Rod Skoe

75 Rev. Dr. Martin
Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol Building, Room 235
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
651-296-4196
sen.rod.skoe@senate.mn

Senator LeRoy Stumpf

75 Rev. Dr. Martin
Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol Building, Room 122
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
651-296-8660
Email: Use mail form

Representative David Dill

571 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 Roger Erickson

527 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin
Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-4265
800-920-5867
rep.roger.erickson@house.mn

Representative Dan Fabian

307 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin
Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-9635
888-727-0979
rep.dan.fabian@house.mn

Prepare your home for your vacation

If you plan on spending time away from your home while on vacation, remember to prepare it for your absence. With the proper preparations you can cut electrical costs and keep your home and electronics safe while you are away.

The Safe Electricity program has the following recommendations to prepare your home for vacation:

- Change thermostat settings before you leave. When temperatures are warm outside, it is unnecessary to keep your home as cool as you normally would since you will not be in it. You can either turn the thermostat up to a higher than normal temperature, such as 85 degrees, or turn it off entirely.
- Unplug appliances and electronics. You will not use your computer, television or toaster while you are away, but

they will use your money if you do not unplug them. Even when appliances are turned off, many of them go into standby mode and continue to draw power. Unplug appliances and electronics to prevent phantom power draw, and keep your electronics safe if there is a power surge in your absence.

- Adjust the water heater. In the average home the water heater accounts for 15 to 25 percent of the average energy bill, according to **EnergySavers.gov**. Water heaters use a lot of energy to store water at a warm

temperature, which you won't need when you are on vacation. Turn the water heater to the lowest setting, or if you will be gone more than three days, turn it off.

- If you plan on leaving lights on to deter burglars, put the lights on a timer. You can save money by not having lights on constantly and make it appear that people are home by varying the times the lights are on.

For more tips on keeping your home safe and efficient year-round, visit **EnergyEdCouncil.org**.



The value is electric!

One tank of gas for your car

20 gallons at \$3.44/gallon = **\$68.80**

More than 20 days of electricity for your entire home = **\$68.80***

*Based on North Star Electric average residential usage of 875 kWh per month at the residential rate of \$.113/kWh + Minnesota surcharge of \$.003/kWh (Does not include the \$36 basic service fee)

