

Boiler inspection

Outage completes busy year at Young Station

A 3,000-degree fire burns almost around the clock inside the Young 2 boiler.

But on Sept. 7, the 15-story structure went dark and quiet — if only for a moment. During the next 12 weeks, flashes of light from welding torches filled the vast space, each flicker providing a glimpse of progress.

The boiler was the primary focus of one of the longest scheduled maintenance outages in Young 2's 36-year history. Crews of skilled workers scoured the plant's 125 miles of boiler tubing, repairing and replacing sections worn from years of exposure to extreme temperatures.

At the peak of the outage activity, about 390 contractors were on site near Center, N.D., assisting Minnkota Power Cooperative's 160 plant employees. Young 2, one of two coal-based units operated by Minnkota, began producing power again Nov. 28. Minnkota is North Star's wholesale power provider.

Major projects were completed in the lower sections of the unit's boiler, including the replacement of all 12 cyclone reentrant throats. Positioned at the base of the boiler, the reentrant throats force the hot gases from the ignited coal into the furnace area. That heat boils water in vertical tubing along the walls and top of the boiler, eventually turning it to steam.

"Optimizing the reentrant throat design will help increase the combustion efficiency by allowing a more complete burnout of the coal in the cyclone," said Tim Hagerott, Minnkota production engineer II, who led the project.

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Using a suspended scaffolding system, a worker scales the Young 2 boiler wall to complete padwelds and other repairs.

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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' December meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine action, the board voted to approve Manager Hoskins' travel to Washington, D.C., for a legislative trip in February, to approve passing through Minnkota Power Cooperative's adjustment of the wholesale bill surcharge from \$.003 to \$.004 per kWh effective April 1, 2014, to renew membership with Cooperative Network, and to change board meeting dates with conflicts. The upcoming board meetings will be held Jan. 8, Feb. 10, Feb. 25, and April 3.

Staff reports included the financial report and shifting the billing cycle from reading meters on the 20th of every month, to reading meters on the last day of every month. The move is being made to replicate the change happening with the wholesale power bill reading dates. To accommodate this, each of the billing periods for May through September will cover approximately 32 days. The due date will also slide forward two days each month beginning in June, until reaching the point in October when the new due date going forward will be the 20th of every month. The January bill will be the first with the Basic Service fee increasing \$2 per month and the price per kWh decreasing \$.003, which, in an average situation, creates no change in the total of

a member's bill. Members with no usage will see an increase of no more than \$2 per month, and members with higher usage will see a slight decrease in their bill. Staffing was discussed, including the hiring of journeyman lineman Preston Kennedy of Littlefork. North Star's grassroots members are doing the best job, among Minnesota's rural electric cooperatives, of speaking up regarding the direction the EPA is taking to eliminate any coal-fired generated electricity, regardless of the expensive technological advances the industry has made to reduce emissions. The 2014 budget was reviewed in detail. It shows a very slim margin, but no rate increase. Other items discussed were new services, line construction projects, off-peak load control hours, the plans for this spring's construction of the cooperative's solar demonstration project at the headquarters office, CIP conservation rebates, Operation Round Up and upcoming meetings.

Reports were provided from the Minnkota Power Cooperative, Square Butte Electric Cooperative and Cooperative Network meetings.

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.

THE VALUE IS ELECTRIC!

One tank of gas for your car

20 gallons at \$3.29/gallon = **\$65.80**

More than 20 days of electricity for your entire home = **\$65.80***

*Based on North Star Electric average residential usage of 875 kWh per month at the residential rate of \$.11/kWh + Minnkota surcharge of \$.003/kWh
(Does not include the \$38 basic service fee)



Dan Hoskins
General Manager

MANAGER'S REPORT

Ladies and gentlemen, as I write this it is toward the end of December and we have already had 5-6 weeks with below zero temps, and looks like there is more on the way. We could be in for a long winter. Anyway, I hope everyone had

a good Christmas and the little chubby guy dressed in red and white stopped by your house to give you gifts, and then you made your New Year's resolution for 2014. I usually do, make a resolution that is, but I make it simple enough that when I break it on Jan. 2 or 3, it doesn't really affect me or anyone else.

Well, 2014 is upon us and we now start to wonder what we can expect for the upcoming year as far as weather (global warming, and you thought I forgot about this), legislation (something that no one has forgotten about) and EPA regulations (something I wish we could forget about)! But, no matter what, your cooperative employees will be here to handle whatever comes our way and to inform you of all happenings.

I am not going to keep you long, just wanted to say hi and wish everyone a healthy and blessed New Year. Oh, there is one thing you could do for me as we begin the new year of 2014. We

have no idea what the weather will bring the next 12 months. When the roads are closed, no travel is advised and the air is bone chilling cold and well below zero with a wind chill that makes ice cream seem warm, your linemen are there (Bernice Frieser, 132-06-006-04). Or this coming summer when the air is stifling hot with humidity that makes it hard to breathe, or the storm clouds fill the sky, your linemen are there. Whatever the weather brings, your North Star Electric Cooperative linemen are there. They keep the lights on, so I ask you to join me with a little prayer to keep them safe all year long.

May He protect them as they journey over the morning dew heading into the daylight sun, and through the evening shadows as they work in the wind and rain, the storms that breathe fire in streaks or the cold that freezes every breath they take. Keep their minds sharp and clear so to guide their hands to work safely and to prepare them for the unknown, the disasters or the outages that are out of anyone's control. Protect them as they enter the darkest night to restore power and bring us back to light. God we pray you watch over our linemen for all of us who depend on their skills and see them home safely each night to the warmth of their families. Amen.

God bless you and our troops, Dan

OFFICE JOB OPENING

Administrative Assistant/Billing Clerk

North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Due to a retirement in Baudette, North Star Electric Cooperative is looking for a dynamic person with a positive attitude to assist the members with cooperative services and to provide administrative services for the team. Please consider applying if you have proven skills to work effectively with the public and fellow employees, demonstrate your desire to help others, are detail oriented,

work accurately with numbers, work proficiently on computers, produce high-quality work, are a team player and communicate well in all areas. We will look very favorably on applicants with a college degree in Business or Accounting or have related experience, as there is room for advancement.

Since we are a cooperative, we are owned by those who purchase electricity from us; therefore, it is very important that applicants be genuinely dedicated to meeting the members' needs, which we have been doing for 73 years.

Our Touchstone Energy® values are

Accountability, Integrity, Innovation and Commitment to Community. If your values match ours and your abilities match the requirements, please send your résumé and completed application form before **Feb. 10, 2014**, to apply for this full-time position (application form can be found on our website: www.nse.coop).

North Star Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 719

Baudette, MN 56623

nsec@wikel.com

218-634-2202 or FAX 218-634-2203

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.

• 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.)



Sub-zero temperatures, high market prices force load control

Off-peak heating consumers of North Star Electric have experienced a jump in load control hours in late December and early January due to a combination of high loads, extremely cold temperatures, low wind production and expensive wholesale power market prices.

The widespread extreme cold weather has driven electric loads to high levels not seen in the Midwest for many years. With temperatures dropping to 20 and 30 below zero across the region for several days, Minnkota Power Cooperative, our wholesale power provider, made a reasonable and economical choice to control the off-peak loads and avoid costly power market purchases.

"Because of these extreme low temperatures and the high demand for electricity, power prices in the wholesale marketplace were well above Minnkota's economical purchase price," said Todd Sailer, Minnkota energy supply manager.

Before controlling off-peak loads, Minnkota first looks to purchase energy from the wholesale power market. When power cannot be obtained economically, Minnkota and the associated systems choose to

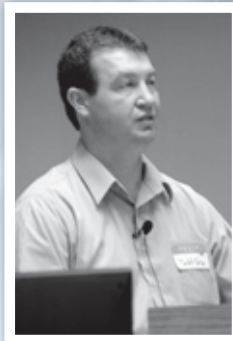
control off-peak electric systems. The load management program protects consumers from skyrocketing market prices and prevents the need to build new power plants just to serve peak loads.

"The cost to purchase and deliver power to the associated systems can change at a moment's notice," Sailer said. "Load management is a vital tool for Minnkota to use to keep wholesale power prices competitive."

Sailer said that even with the recent cold temperatures, end-of-season load control totals will still be near the preseason estimate of 250 hours.

All members are encouraged to check their backup heating systems, especially those who use propane or fuel oil. Sailer said members with a well-maintained backup heating system should not notice a difference in comfort level when their off-peak heating system is controlled.

"The transition between the two systems should be seamless," he said.



"The cost to purchase and deliver power to the associated systems can change at a moment's notice."

TODD SAILER,
MINNKOTA ENERGY SUPPLY MANAGER

DIGGING SOON?



Statement of Nondiscrimination

North Star Electric Cooperative, Incorporated is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Ann Ellis, Assistant General Manager/Finance Manager. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call toll free (866)632-9992 (voice) or (800)877-8339 (TDD) or (866)377-8642 (relay voice users). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

Boiler inspection *(continued from page 1)*

Better combustion will help plant operators more efficiently manage coal variability and reduce the amount of costly urea consumption needed in emission control processes.

"The technology is far more advanced than when Young 2 went into service in 1977," Hagerott said.

Top to bottom

Much of the bottom portion of the boiler near the cyclones was in deteriorating condition and required maintenance. About 6½ miles of carbon steel boiler tubing were replaced, including entire sections of the flooring and front and rear walls.

Fifty-foot sections of the boiler were cut out, connected to a chain rigging system and removed. Nearly 800 welds were needed to install the new equipment, each one X-rayed to check for even the tiniest flaw that could cause chaos under pressure.

"We need to X-ray every tube weld to ensure that we will not have any flaws that could cause a tube leak down the road," Hagerott said.

Safety played a critical role in the process. While crews were working in the bottom of the boiler, a temporary rigging deck was constructed to allow others to conduct routine maintenance in the upper portion of the boiler at the same time.

"The rigging plan paid huge dividends for us," Hagerott said. "It took a considerable amount of time and effort to set up, but it allowed for the safe removal and replacement of the panels."

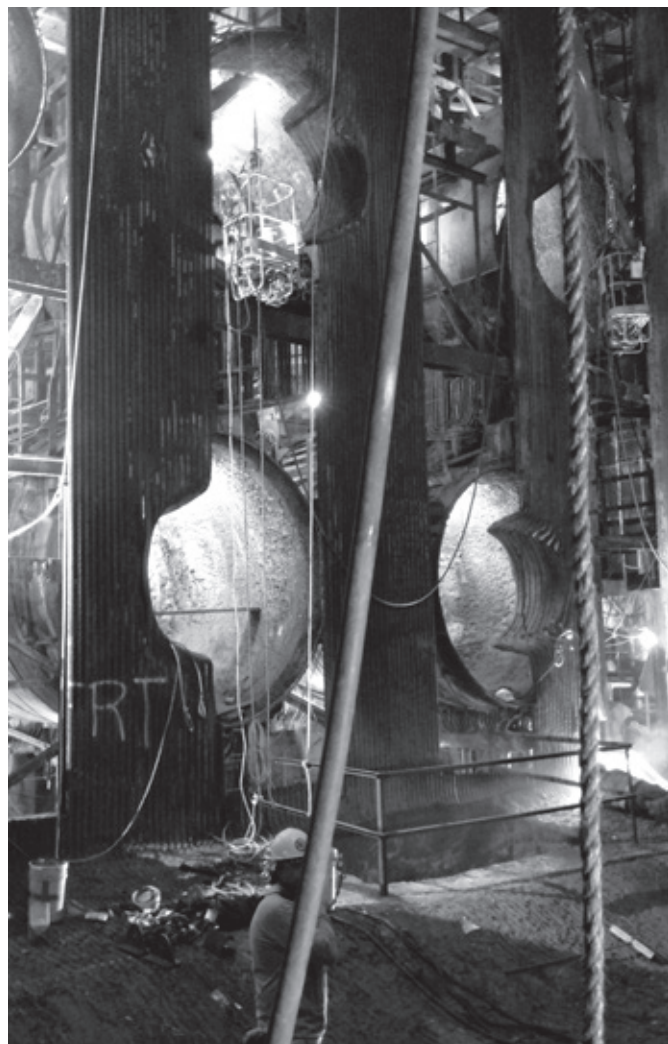
Crew members used a suspended scaffolding system to safely climb the boiler walls, examining the maze of tubing in dark, confined conditions. Inspectors look for erosion that has occurred from the abrasive effects of fly ash or from the high-powered jets of steam from the sootblowers that are used in ash and slag removal.

Bold schedule

Gerry Pfau, plant manager, said extensive recordkeeping from these boiler inspections aids in identifying areas of concern and planning outages more efficiently.

"Every opportunity we get to look at the boiler, we do," Pfau said. "We not only look at the repairs we have scheduled, but we also inspect other parts of the boiler to see what needs to be repaired immediately or, at the very least, update our list of projects for the next outage."

The Young 2 outage was the second major planned outage conducted by Minnkota in 2013. A five-week outage on Young 1



All 12 boiler cyclone reentrant throats and the adjacent walls and flooring were replaced during the outage. The new reentrant throats were installed in the circular openings in the boiler wall where the hot gases are forced into the furnace.

was completed in the spring.

"It is rare for us to schedule two major outages in the same year," Pfau said. "It was a very aggressive plan, but everyone worked well together to ensure each project – big or small – was done safely and efficiently."

Other capital projects completed in the boiler during the outage included replacement of one of the feedwater heaters and the expansion joints associated with the gas recirculation hopper and the flue economizer to air heater.

While equipment inside the plant was being overhauled, significant construction activity occurred outside. Young 2's coal receiving facilities were modified to accommodate BNI Coal upgrading from 180- to 240-ton delivery haulers. The new haulers require a larger, stronger metal grating system to drive on and dump the coal.

Regularly scheduled maintenance has helped the Young Station perform well above industry standards in recent years (Alan Van Reese, 556-42-068-20). In 2012, a nonoutage year, Young 2 was available 92 percent of the time and Young 1 was available more than 96 percent of the time.

"We're happy to be done with this maintenance cycle so we can get back to our main job of generating electricity," Pfau said.



The Young 2 coal receiving area was modified to include a strengthened metal grating system to handle larger coal trucks.

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

and prevention methods



What is carbon monoxide?

Often called the "Silent Killer," carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that is colorless,

odorless and tasteless. CO is a common hazard resulting from incomplete combustion of items such as natural gas, gasoline, kerosene, oil, propane, coal, wood or any other material containing carbon.

How does CO harm you?

Carbon monoxide is harmful in two ways: **1.** It displaces oxygen, potentially creating an oxygen-deficient atmosphere; **2.** When breathed into the lungs, the hemoglobin in your blood binds to the carbon monoxide instead of oxygen. This not only deprives the heart, brain and other vital organs of oxygen, but poisons your cells because CO is toxic.

Large amounts of CO can overcome you in minutes without warning, causing you to lose consciousness and suffocate. Besides tightness across the chest, initial symptoms of CO poisoning may include headache, fatigue, dizziness, drowsiness or nausea. Sudden chest pain may occur in people with angina. During prolonged or high exposures, symptoms may worsen and include vomiting, confusion and collapse in addition to loss of consciousness and muscle weakness.

Symptoms can vary widely.

CO poisoning may occur sooner in those most susceptible: young children, elderly people, people with lung or heart disease, people at high altitudes or those who already have elevated CO blood levels, such as smokers. CO poisoning can be reversed if caught in time. But even if you recover, acute poisoning may result in permanent damage to the parts of your body that require a lot of oxygen such as the heart and brain.

What can you do if you suspect someone has been poisoned?

- Move the victim immediately to fresh air in an open area.
- Call 911 for medical attention or assistance.
- Administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation if the victim has stopped breathing.

What can you do to help prevent CO poisoning?

At Work:

- Report any situation to your supervisor/superintendent that might cause CO to accumulate.
- Be alert to ventilation problems in enclosed areas where gases of burning fuels may be released.
- Report promptly complaints of dizziness, drowsiness or nausea.
- Avoid overexertion if you suspect CO

poisoning and leave the contaminated area.

- Avoid the use of gas-powered engines, such as those in powered washers as well as heaters and forklifts, while working in enclosed spaces.

At Home:

- If you have natural gas, propane, fuel oil or wood appliances/heaters in your home, purchase and install a CO detector. Test the CO detector per the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Ice fishing shelters, garages and other enclosed structures with portable heaters are susceptible to CO hazards. Properly vent combustion appliances and regularly inspect venting for leaks.

Source: *Behind the Lines*, Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc.

State law for active duty military

State law offers active military personnel additional payment options for their electric bills. The law covers disconnection, payment arrangements, appeal and annual notice to cooperative members. Similar to the state's Cold Weather Rule, an application must be completed and income guidelines exist. It's available for active duty military personnel, deployed or a permanent duty station change.

**Unclaimed capital
credits donated
to local nonprofit
organization**



RVDA treasurer Christine Hultman receives a check from Mike Hanson, board member from District 4.



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NorthStarElectric](http://www.facebook.com/NorthStarElectric)



COMMENTARY

Listen to what your mother told you; if it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't true

I am sure that you have heard radio ads or have seen ads in newspapers and magazines that claim they can cut your heating bill by up to 50 percent by buying their electric space heater. With the high price of heating in northern Minnesota, who wouldn't like to do that? I know I would, but the key wording in these ads is **up to**. There is a lot of difference between 50 percent and **up to** 50 percent. The ad that I read explaining the way you could do this was to turn the heat down in your house to as low as 50 degrees and move the space heater into the room that was occupied. The savings are not in the heater; it is because you turned the heat in your house down to 50 degrees. They claim the space heater will not reduce humidity or

oxygen, which is true, but it is also true that the space heater you buy at the local hardware store doesn't either. There are 3,413 Btus for each kilowatt-hour, and the only way to get more is with heat pump technology. I have not seen nor heard of anything like that with portable electric heaters. In northern Minnesota, during the winter, one plug-in space heater is not going to heat a 1,000-square-foot home. My advice is that if you have a cold spot in your house and \$200 burning a hole in your pocket, go to your local hardware store, buy a space heater for \$50 and use the other \$150 to reinsulate your home or give it to your favorite charity.



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.collinpeterhouse.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

2014 power plant tour

June 24-26

We are offering all North Star Electric members an exceptional summer opportunity that's fun for all ages. This year's tour is three days, which will make the trip more relaxing (Megeen Thomas, 795-07-005-55). The tour is scheduled for Tuesday through Thursday, June 24-26.

The first day, we will tour Minnkota's control center and print shop 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 once again be used 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 the hydroelectric plant. We will end our day by returning to the Seven Seas for supper.



On the third day, we will drive by the Ashtabula Wind Energy Center near Valley City, N.D., and then visit the Infinity wind turbine by Petersburg, N.D. Some of our energy is generated at both sites. The wind towers at Ashtabula are 250 feet tall with 120-foot blades. After that, we're off to Grand Forks for lunch and then back home.

The 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.



Power Plant Tour Registration Form

Names of Participants

Address

Telephone Number _____

Account Number _____

Number Attending _____

Have you enjoyed this trip in the past? N/Y What year? _____

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 Cooperative, P.O. Box 719, Baudette, MN 56623