

Operation Round Up helps local programs



The North Star Community Trust Board met in January to review the 28 applications they received requesting funding for various programs. The total amount requested was more than \$33,000. The board had about \$9,000 to work with, so it was not an easy task selecting which group would get funding and what amount they would receive.

Many local programs and organizations benefit from Operation Round Up, a voluntary member-driven fundraising program of North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc., that is designed to provide financial assistance for worthwhile projects and charities in the area. Donations are given to organizations to help make the area a more pleasant and safe place to live.

All funds for Operation Round Up are contributed by the member-owners of North Star Electric and the money is put into a trust fund that is separate from

electric accounts. The trust is administered by its own board of directors comprised of people from across the area.

Operation Round Up directors are appointed by North Star's board members and must be members of the cooperative. The cooperative's general manager is a nonvoting member of the board.

Organizations from the area may apply for a donation from the Operation Round Up Trust. The applicant must be charitable in nature and be working to meet a need in our area. The Operation Round Up board meets twice a year and decides if an application meets the guidelines of the trust and if funds are available.

If a member chooses to be part of Operation Round Up, their bill is "rounded up" to the next highest dollar. For example, if a bill is \$96.47, the computer

2014 winners



Front row from left to right: Julie Lepisto, North Star Electric Community Trust Board; Diane Adams, Koochiching County Community TV; Larry Warrington, North Star Electric Community Trust Board. **Second row:** Carol Burmeister, Big Falls CERC; Cynthia Jaksa, Koochiching County Community TV; Mary Jo Winkel, Littlefork Lutheran Quilters; Cheri Skurkis, Northern Light Quilt Guild. **Third row:** Tom Donahou, Littlefork Ambulance; Marty Cody, Northland Amateur Radio Association; Loren Lehman, Littlefork Fire Department; Jerolyn Nordlund, Littlefork School; Mary Ellen Lehman, North Star Electric Community Trust Board.



Front row from left to right: Debra Sindelir, Northwest Community Action Early Childhood; Gretchen Thompson, North Star Electric Community Trust Board; Mike Hirst, Lake of the Woods Keep it Clean Task Force. **Second row:** Roseann Swenson, Salvation Army Heat Share; Jenny Moorman, Lake of the Woods School Forest; Gerald Levasseur, Northwest Community Action Reach out for Warmth.

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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.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Highlights from the BOARDROOM

These are the highlights from the board of directors' January meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine action, the board voted to approve the rates for rental LED security lighting, to approve the 2014 Budget, to select all directors as delegates to the Minnkota/Square Butte annual meetings and to approve passing through Minnkota's surcharge, which is increasing from \$.003 to \$.004 per kWh, beginning with the April bill.

Staff reports included the financial report, the ANI Pharmaceuticals expansion of products, changing the date when meters are read to match when Minnkota reads the substation meters, that the January bills will be the first showing a reduced price per kWh and offsetting increased

Basic Service Fee, the announcement of Kathy Senti's retirement effective June 1, projected load control hours, CIP conservation rebates, high use concerns, Operation Round Up, LED security lighting, the June power plant tour for members, maintenance and inspections on equipment and personnel.

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

DIGGING SOON?



Like us on
Facebook

Find us on Facebook

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



THE VALUE IS ELECTRIC!

One tank of gas for your car
20 gallons at \$3.34/gallon = **\$66.80**
More than 20 days of electricity for your entire home = **\$66.80***

*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

"Maybe the EPA and assorted groups, along with some high powered politicians, shouldn't try to take away coal-fired electricity, which is a dependable, reliable, **CONSTANT** and cheap source of electricity when they need it to heat their homes!"

Brrrrrrrr, I hope all of you are staying warm! This has been a very cold winter and I am sure that your heating bills show it. I have noticed that the longer the weather stays with us, the more folks change their minds. At first when it turned cold, about three months ago now, I would say, kinda chilly out isn't it, and their response was, well this is northern Minnesota. Really? Then a couple of months ago I would say something like, it's still cold, and they would say, it's just a cold snap. Ya think? A snap lasts about one thousandth of a second! Then most recently I would say, this cold weather is ridiculous and I am getting tired of it and their response was, are you ready for this? We are too! I knew Mother Nature would wear them down!

Have you ever noticed how Mother has a way of bringing out all the warning signs for us? Like maybe we shouldn't try to build a house along a river that has been known to flood, or maybe we shouldn't live in a mobile home in tornado alley without a storm shelter, or maybe we shouldn't live in a stick house along the coast where hurricanes are prominent. So, maybe the EPA and assorted groups, along with some high powered politicians, shouldn't try to take away coal-fired electricity, which is a dependable, reliable, **CONSTANT** and cheap source of electricity when they need it to heat their homes! Can you imagine no dependable electricity this winter and all we had was wind and solar and maybe some natural gas-fired generators that when fuel prices go up so would electric prices?

I think you all know what I am talking about. Solar only works in daylight hours, wind is not dependable, propane, well, you can see what happened to the propane prices when demand was up and product was limited and that same thing would and does happen to natural gas. So, to have our power plants fueled by natural gas would be a huge mistake. Because the price on that product would fluctuate with demand, and it has a history of fluctuating, so our electric rates could not remain stable as they currently are.

So, instead of having low cost electricity, you would have market based rates which would be based on the

cost of the fuel. This would mean that when we needed electricity, it would cost a bundle because fuel would be in high demand and of course at a higher cost, which would jack the price of electricity. Then, of course, when we didn't need electricity there would be an abundance at a lower cost because demand on the fuel is low and its cost would go back down. Clear as mud right, but I think you get my drift.

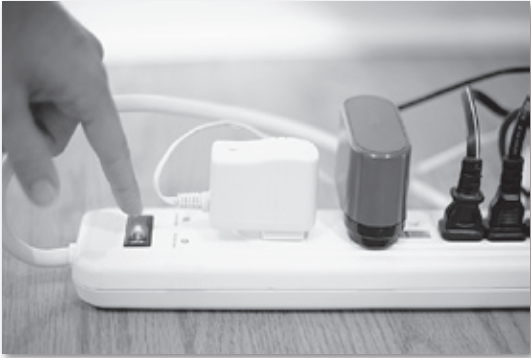
I know that global warming has been blamed for everything that happens on this earth, from rising gas prices to the elections, the crash of the stock markets to the sand storms, the amount of snow we get to grandma burning the buns. Yes, it seems that whoever they are has traded their beliefs of global warming in on climate change and now coal fired energy gets blamed for everything that happens on this earth, go figure! Are there climate changes? Of course there are, otherwise we would still have the glacier that formed Lake Agassiz sitting on top of us, and that glacier did not melt because we were burning coal to create electricity. So, all this cold weather is said to come from a high pressure that is created by climate change, which is supposedly caused by coal fired energy, over the polar ice caps and squashing the cold air down until now it is spreading down into our region. Doesn't it just warm your heart knowing there are people out there that have time to sit and think this stuff up!

To sum it all up, don't get rid of our dependable, reliable, low cost electricity generators, we need them and that green stuff can't cut it!

In closing, retired Koochiching County law officer John Mastin passed away recently at his home in Custer, SD. I knew John through his wife Carolyn who worked for North Star at our Littlefork office for many years. John was always pleasant to talk with and very knowledgeable on a number of energy topics. His career as a law officer was a good one and he was so well respected throughout the area by the people he served. We pray for strength for Carolyn and family and may God bless John.

God Bless you and our troops, Dan

Getting smart about your use of standby power



Some of your electronics are probably costing you money, even when they are turned off, because of standby power. According to **EnergyStar.gov**, the average household spends about \$100 per year on standby power.

Standby power is the energy that is used by a device when it is turned off but still

plugged in. Standby power can be useful as it powers remote control sensors, clock displays, cordless phones, etc. However, if you have a device that is plugged in that doesn't need to be turned on quickly or isn't needed for the clock display, then you have an opportunity to save money.

There are steps you can take to decrease the amount of standby power your home uses:

- Unplug your devices. For some devices, it might be more trouble than it is worth to unplug, like clocks or cable and satellite television boxes that hold program information. However, unplugging devices that are seldom used like secondary TVs or mobile device chargers can keep you from wasting money.
- Enable power management settings. Most computers and many peripherals have some sort of power management settings that will allow devices to go into a sleep mode that will save energy when they are not being used.
- Use a power strip. By plugging your entire entertainment or computer system into a power strip, you can flip one switch and shut all of the components down at the same time.

Another money-saving option is to use smart power strips, which can make it much easier to manage standby power. A smart power strip has some outlets that are always on and some that control other outlets on the power strip. Outlets that are always on are just like those on a regular power strip outlet. These outlets are where you plug in things that will not be powered down – for example, a modem or backup power supply on a computer system or the cable box on a home entertainment system. Next is the control outlet, which determines if the remaining switched outlets on the strip are powered on or off.

Using home entertainment example, if the TV is plugged into the control outlet and turned on, then the rest of the switched outlets on the smart power strip will also power up (130-31-003-03, Joyce Helmstetter). Devices like a DVD player, surround sound system or other peripherals might be plugged into these outlets and will be powered up. When the TV is turned off, everything plugged into switched outlets will be powered down, saving you money.

You can find more information on standby power and smart power strips as well as other money saving tips at **EnergyEdCouncil.org**.

NOTICE TO COGENERATORS

In compliance with Minnesota Adopted Rules Relating to Cogeneration and small Power Production, chapter 7835, North Star Electric Cooperative is required to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers that satisfy the conditions of a Qualify Facility.

North Star Electric has available and will provide free information to all interested members regarding rates and interconnection requirements. An application for interconnection is required for a Qualifying Facility to interconnect and operate in parallel with the cooperative's distribution system and is subject to approval by the cooperative.

Any disputes over interconnections, sales and purchases are subject to resolution by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. For more information, please call Wayne Haukaas at 218-634-2202.



PRESIDENTS' DAY

*North Star Electric Cooperative
will be closed*

**Monday, Feb. 17,
for Presidents' Day**



Power lines that gallop

Galloping power lines may sound ridiculous, but they really do occur and can be very dangerous. The most common cause of galloping lines is ice that builds up on one side of a power line as a result of strong winds (252-26-001-04, Shawna Wendler). This buildup creates an airfoil, which changes the flow of air around the normally round line. This change in air flow can cause the power line to start to bounce. These lines can bounce and buck enough to hit another line, damage themselves enough to cause a power outage, or even fall to the ground.

Once galloping starts, there is not much a power company can do to alleviate it until winds die down. This is why many power lines have objects, like twisted wire



or round or angular pieces of metal attached to the line. These are devices placed on power lines to help reduce the galloping of lines and prevent potential danger.

If you encounter galloping lines, stay away, warn others to stay away, and contact your utility. In addition to the possibility of power outages, there is a danger of the lines or other electrical equipment breaking loose and falling and of ice being dislodged from the lines and falling to the ground.

The Safe Electricity program urges you to pay attention to and be aware of weather forecasts so that you can be prepared and not get caught off guard by a wind storm, and to keep the following safety tips in mind after a windstorm:

- When you see power lines on the ground, stay away, warn others to stay away, and contact the electric utility or 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live.
- Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines which are sagging or down, could be in

contact with an energized power line, also making them dangerous. So stay away from all lines.

- Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Downed power lines can energize objects around it, such as chain link fences and metal culverts.
- Keep in mind that a line that is “dead” could still become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.
- Never drive over a downed line. It could cause poles or other

equipment to come crashing down.

- If you are in a car that has come in contact with a downed power line, stay in your vehicle. Wait until the utility crew has arrived and de-energized the line. Warn others not to approach the car. Only exit the car in the case of fire; and, in doing so, be sure to jump out and away from the car with both feet together. Then hop away while continuing to keep both feet together.

Get more electrical safety information at SafeElectricity.org.

The National Review on climate change

In the National Review, Texas Public Policy Foundation Distinguished Senior Fellow Kathleen Hartnett White has written a highly critical 1,500-word piece about the fatal flaws in President Obama’s current climate policies.

Despite scientific evidence that climate change might not be caused by humans, she says, the president doubles down on what he calls the “unequivocal” dictates of science by pursuing broad executive action without a congressionally legislated foundation.

In her view, the Administration’s Climate Action Plan is incoherent, “futile, wasteful, and redundant,” and if the EPA’s unachievable emissions regulations foreshadow the agency’s future CO2 agenda, expect energy scarcity in this country.

In conclusion, White suggests that the US replace the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change with a body that would pursue observational research instead of imposing dogma.

To view the entire story go to: <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/369772/gathering-storm-kathleen-hartnett-white>. If you don’t have access to a computer please give North Star a call and we will mail you a copy of the article.

A high-wire act

Stringing thick cable onto a 140-foot-tall tower is a job guaranteed to generate its share of white-knuckle moments. But aerial crews working on the Center to Grand Forks Transmission Line Project make the high-wire act look like another day at the office.

Taking to the skies by helicopter, these skilled workers have been moving one pole at a time across 250 miles of North Dakota prairie this year. When the line is complete in spring 2014, it will transmit electricity at 345,000 volts from northwest of Bismarck, N.D., to Grand Forks. From there, the energy will be delivered throughout the Red River Valley and beyond.

The \$350 million project is being completed by Minnkota Power Cooperative, our wholesale power provider, to help ensure that stable, reliable electricity is available in our region for many years to come.

Helicopters are used to minimize the impact of construction on local communities, farmland and the environment. They also reduce the use of heavy machinery and other vehicles on the ground and shorten the project's overall schedule.

Minnkota contracted Wisconsin-based Michels Corporation to construct and erect the poles, while Haverfield Aviation of Gettysburg, Pa., is connecting the wire on the structure.

So what's it like working 100 feet in the air on these structures?

"At first it was nerve-racking, especially jumping from the structure arm to the ladder," said Marc Poulin, 21, one of the aerial line workers on the Project. "But now the height

doesn't bother me too much because I know I'm all strapped in."

Poulin suits up each workday in a full-body harness, which he attaches to the helicopter while flying and then secures to the structure. When there's a moment of downtime, it's hard not to enjoy the view.

"It's nice when you're up there and you have the time to look around. It's pretty peaceful," Poulin said.

Back on the ground locals are treating the Vermont native like a celebrity. For many, it's the best show in town.

"I think that's the coolest part about the job," Poulin said. "People stop and watch. They want to talk with you. I even had this old couple who took pictures with me."



Marc Poulin

'It's all finesse'

Andrew Rannigan, 28, is one of the helicopter pilots orchestrating the aerial display. He starts his day at a landing zone near the construction site, loading tools and equipment into the Hughes MD 500 chopper.

Aerial line workers such as Poulin are attached to the helicopter using a long orange rope, which essentially serves as a giant umbilical cord. Rannigan glides and hovers mere feet from the tower, allowing the line workers to reattach themselves and their tools to the horizontal structure arm.

"It's something that most people don't see every day," Rannigan said. "It's really a very safe operation. We know where the structures are and



Andrew Rannigan

Aerial line workers position themselves on a 140-foot-tall Center to Grand Forks Transmission Line structure.

we're not moving very fast. It's not about speed, it's all about finesse."

Line stringing is completed in three steps. First, workers thread a guide rope through a pulley block. Once the rope is in place, crews attach a smaller steel cable to it and pull that line through. The steel cable is then attached to the heavy transmission cable, which is pulled back the other way and hooked into place.

Hand and head signals help Rannigan respond to the needs of the 10-person crew. While they work, he is busy repositioning line workers and delivering tools and supplies from the landing zone. When the structure is done, he picks up the ladder with the line workers on it and flies ahead 1,000 feet to the next structure.

"When we first started this job, it took us a whole day to do one structure," Rannigan said. "Now, when the weather cooperates, we're doing eight to 10 structures a day."

Weather is the biggest factor in how much work gets done each day, Rannigan said. Too much wind or precipitation can stall the project for days at a time.

"The procedures are always the same, but there are other elements that are always changing," Rannigan said. "It seems like no two structures are ever exactly alike."

Similar to Poulin, Rannigan, who lives in Virginia, has noticed the extra attention on the CGF Project.

"We have people who stop their car on the side of the road and they get out and talk to us," he said.

When asked if people ever tell him he's crazy, Rannigan said, "That's usually the first thing that comes out of their mouth."

Poulin was quick to add, "Either that or, 'whatever you get paid it isn't enough.'"



Aerial line workers hang from a structure arm while they work on the Center to Grand Forks Transmission Line. The line is being constructed by Minnkota Power Cooperative, our wholesale power provider.

Center to Grand Forks Project

INTERESTING STATS

- 1.4** — Average cost per mile in millions.
- 2** — Construction years.
- 125-140** — Average height in feet of structure poles.
- 212** — Number of contractor personnel at height of construction
- 250** — Line miles.
- 350** — Cost of the line in millions.
- 330** — Tons of reinforcement steel.
- 1,334** — Tower structures.
- 3,850** — Number of semi-trailer loads of material.
- 3,930** — Conductor arms.
- 16,065** — Bird flight diverters.
- 96,700** — Cubic yards of concrete (could fill 30 Olympic size swimming pools).
- 11,246,890** — Feet of wire (equivalent to 2,130 miles, or the driving distance between Miami, Fla., and Grand Forks).



We need your help!

Comment period for proposed GHG rule for new power plants open

North Star Electric Cooperative is asking its members to help join the fight against onerous proposed carbon regulations.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has launched a 60-day public comment period on its proposed emissions standards for carbon from new power plants. The proposal was placed in the Federal Register on Jan. 8.

The scoop: If finalized, the proposed rule would regulate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, including carbon dioxide, from new power plants under the Clean Air Act's provisions for new source performance standards (NSPS). Once the rule was published on Jan. 8, it began the official comment period (comments due March 10).

What you can do: Go to **action.coop** to sign up with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), make a comment and learn more about the new power plants proposal and other EPA proposals that would impact our rates. Though PKM and our wholesale energy provider, Minnkota Power Cooperative, face a more significant battle when the proposed rule for existing power plants comes out later this year, NRECA wants members to sign up and comment at **action.coop** about the rule and also wants to prepare and get infrastructure in place for the proposed existing power plants rule.

What people are saying about the rule: Jo Ann Emerson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), recently drew attention to the important role access to all fuels plays in the reliability and affordability of electricity in America. She believes coal plants should remain a vital part of the U.S. energy mix.

"We must be deliberate and purposeful with our energy policy to avoid depriving cost-conscious American families and businesses the affordable, reliable energy they count on as a basic component of everyday life," she said in a NRECA release. "The competitiveness of the U.S. economy depends upon options when it comes to energy and the regional,

economic and demographic differences demand flexibility and freedom when deciding which fuels will keep us moving forward."

John Graves, environmental manager for Minnkota, has said "although the administration has said that coal is part of the energy future, this rule if finalized as proposed, will effectively stop coal from being used as a fuel for new power plants."

How would it impact the coal-based Milton R. Young Station, Minnkota's major source of energy? This rule wouldn't directly impact the Young Station. It's only for new power plants. However, regulations for new power plants must be promulgated before proposed regulations for existing power plants can be published and eventually finalized. The proposed existing power plants rule could have a significant impact on electric rates.

Some believe that the purpose of the proposed rule for new power plants is only so EPA can set up for more expansive regulations that will cover the nation's existing fleet of power plants. After all, EPA says very few new coal-based power plants will be built in the future.

Why the proposed new power plants rule isn't feasible for coal-based plants: The

rule relies on carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology. There is no commercially viable CCS technology. EPA is betting that the technology will be developed. However, the Clean Air Act requires that the technology be commercially viable at the time the regulations are put in place.

What's next: Comments on the proposed rule for new power plants will be taken until March 10. EPA also is working on those proposed NSPS guidelines for GHG emissions for existing power plants, due by June. That is the proposed rule that could potentially have a significant impact on electric rates.

This is an important issue. For North Star Electric members who do not have Internet access, please fill out the form below and return it to North Star Electric Cooperative before March 3.

----- Cut here -----

Printed Name: _____ Phone# _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

I authorize America's Electric Cooperative to communicate on my behalf regarding American's Electricity challenges.

Signature: _____

Thank you from North Star Electric Cooperative, PO Box 719, Baudette MN 56623 (or nsec@wiktel.com or fax 218-634-2203)

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
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202-225-6211
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Twitter: @USRepRickNolan

Congressman Collin Peterson

2109 Rayburn House Office
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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

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Ann Ellis
Assistant General Manager/
Finance Manager

Staff Report

It's the end of January, and if the frigid weather hasn't been bad enough to affect your mood, the combination of off-peak load control and the availability/cost of fuel for your backup heat source has probably had you a little on edge. I'll let the fuel providers explain their challenges, but I want to give you a few facts about what has impacted the off-peak load control and your electric bill.

How much load control – In the last billing period, Minnkota Power Cooperative (owned by you and me) controlled the dual-heat loads for 124 hours – that's 17 percent of the time. Minnkota controls loads when the demand exceeds what they can produce and if reasonably priced power is not available on the market.

Cost of additional power – At one point earlier this month, power was being sold on the market for over \$2/KW, and we charge 5.9 cents – that's far from reasonable.

How about the wind? – When the wind isn't blowing, that 30 percent of our energy portfolio isn't helping out, but you've maybe noticed less load control when it is windy.

Coal – Our coal-fired generators have been running at 100 percent capacity, and coal generated more than two-thirds of your electricity last year. Your retail price per kWh has not increased in almost three years. In spite of billions of dollars being spent to install innovative technologies to reduce emissions on plants across the nation, including the \$425,000,000 spent recently by Minnkota, why are we in a War on Coal with this administration? I guess we need to talk louder because we need stable, reliable and affordably priced electricity, and coal is an important part of achieving that.

Degree days – Last year's January billing period included 1,734 heating degree days. This year was 1,973. No wonder the power lines don't have much sag this winter.

Heroes – Speaking of the lines, we've had very few outages during this horribly cold period. I apologize if you were one of the few who were affected. Our linemen are proactive, and they take a lot of pride in their work. When they were first assigned email accounts, their password had the word "heroes" incorporated in it, because they are.

So, to sum it up, spring will come eventually, and this weather will be just a "remember the year when ...?"

At your service we remain ...Ann

ATTENTION: Parents of high school seniors

Are you aware of North Star Electric's Knowledge Scholarship? To qualify, the parent/guardian must be an active member of North Star Electric, and your child must take a test about your cooperative that provides electricity to your home. North Star Electric will be awarding five scholarships, one \$1,000 and four \$400, plus a chance to win one of eight \$50 cash awards for scoring over 50 percent on the test. Most of the answers will be in the study material that North Star provides. A couple hours of study time could pay off with a \$1,000 scholarship. Last year only 35 students took the test. The information meeting and the test will be given in mid-April. For more information about the scholarships, please call Wayne at North Star Electric or check with your guidance counselor at your school.



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.)



Operation Round Up helps local programs (cont'd)



(continued from page 1)



North Star Electric Community Trust Board members, front row: Larry Warrington; Gretchen Thompson, *vice president*; Peter Granger, *president*. **Second row:** Zelpha Crawford; Margie Sporlein, *secretary-treasurer*; Julie Lepisto; and Mary Ellen Lehman

will round up the bill to \$97. The additional 53 cents will be placed in the trust and distributed to local charitable and community-based programs.

About 80 percent of North Star's members have chosen to participate in Operation Round Up and it is expected that contributions will be about \$ 18,700 each year (675-22-003-02, Joseph E. Maynard). That money goes right back into our community.

The average annual contribution from a member is about \$6. The most that could be contributed in a year by a member is \$11.88 (12 months x 99 cents).

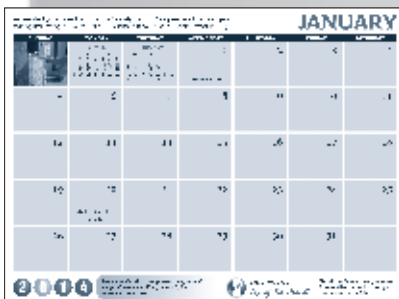
If a member of North Star Electric or a nonmember of the cooperative would like to make an additional contribution, please give our office a call.

At the January meeting \$8,952.50 in Operation Round Up funds were distributed to various qualifying programs and organizations throughout the area including:

Falls Hunger Coalition – Food stocking
Lake of the Woods School Forest – Field Guides
Moose Creek Quilters – Warm the Body to Warm the Heart
Sanford Health – Social Activities
Littlefork Lutheran Quilters – Quilting from the Heart
Clementson Community Cemetery – Beautification of Cemetery
Big Falls CERC – Duluth Children's Museum Trip
Big Falls CERC – Ice Box Theater/book fair
Northwest Community Action – Reach out for Warmth
Northwest Community Action – Early Childhood Carnival
Northwest Community Action – Little Brother/Little Sister
Littlefork Fire Department – Hand tools for rescue truck

Littlefork Fire Department – Generator for rescue truck
Littlefork Ambulance Service – Power cot
Koochiching County Community TV – Television programming
Northland Amateur Radio – Big Falls repeater
Lake of the Woods SWCD – North Central Evironthron
Littlefork School – Sewing
Northern Light Quilt Guild – Material for quilting
Courage Center Camp – Scholarship fund
Kabetogama Fire Department – Gas alert
Keep it Clean Task Force – Remove ice litter
Salvation Army – Heat Share
River Valley Development Association – Community building

2015 North Star wall calendar



For several years North Star has given wall calendars to our membership at our annual meeting. Two years ago we went with the Minnkota Power Systems and the 11 co-ops that own Minnkota had pictures in the calendar. For the 2015 calendar we would like to create one with only pictures of the North Star service area. If you have any pictures that you would like to submit for the calendar, please email them to waynensec@wiktel.com with a short caption (maximum of four pictures). Any member who sends a picture that we use for our calendar will receive a \$50 credit on their energy bill. We would like pictures of the four seasons or members working or playing in our service area. If you have any questions, please give us a call at 888-634-2202 and ask for Wayne.

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. 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