

Install an electric heating system and take advantage of new rebate options!

The long, cold winter is over. As you gear up to take on your summer projects, consider installing reliable, efficient electric heat in your home, shop or business.

Great new incentives are available for the installation of qualifying electric heating equipment. North Star Electric Cooperative members will receive \$20 per kilowatt (kW) installed with a maximum rebate of \$600. The system must be the primary heating source in the building and on the off-peak program with a qualified backup heating source. The system must be 240 volts and hard-wired; plug-in systems are not eligible.

Qualifying heating systems include baseboard heater, boiler, brick storage electric boiler, brick storage electric furnace, brick storage room unit, cove heater, forced-air furnace, hanging unit heater, plenum heater, radiant underfloor heat, slab storage – electric boiler w/pipe and slab storage.

Ground-source heat pumps and air-source heat pumps are also covered under the program on a per ton basis.

Ground-source heat pump rebates are \$200 per ton installed. If your backup is electric resistance heat, it must be on off-peak in order to qualify for the rebate.

Air-source heat pumps receive a \$100 per ton incentive and do not need to be on the off-peak program. The maximum rebate for both ground-source and air-source heat pumps is \$600.

Affordable loans

Low interest rate loans are available through the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency if you want to add an electric heating system. Border State Bank of both Baudette and International Falls and TruStar Federal Credit Union of International Falls will have information on and process the loans, which include a good variety of options and a \$2,000 minimum.



Take the fear out of next year. Switch to off-peak electric heat today.

In this issue:

Board highlights/Always call before you dig (811)	2
Manager's Report	3
Operation Round Up application deadline	4
Use caution when burning ditches/planting season safety	5
Who can wire what and where/Scholarship winners	6
Staff report/Problems paying your bill	7
Giving kids the power to save	8

Last heating season was enough to send a chill up your spine and a scare into your pocketbook. Don't let fuel shortages and price spikes creep up on you again next winter.

Now is the time to install dependable, efficient off-peak electric heating in your home or business. Programs and incentives are available from North Star Electric Cooperative.

Whether you're looking for increased comfort or lower heating costs, consider the powerful value of off-peak electric heat.

Don't wait for the sequel.



MAY 2014

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1-888-6OUTAGE (1-888-668-8243)
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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.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Highlights from the BOARDROOM

These are the highlights from the board of directors' April 3 meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine action, the board voted to seek a matching grant from CoBank to help purchase two hydraulic lift cots for the LakeWood ambulance squad, to approve the 2014 IRP (Integrated Resource Plan), which documents how a utility plans to meet future electric requirements, to select Steve Arnesen as North Star's representative on the Minnkota Power Cooperative board and to select Randy Bergan as North Star's representative on the Square Butte board.

Staff reports included the financial report, capital credit allocation, implementation of the SmartHub app for members to have 24/7 access to their account information, conversion to Secure Payments for credit card payments, federal legislative

issues, load control hours, heating system rebates, promoting electric heating options, Operation Round Up, power plant trips, the Cooperative Knowledge Scholarship, renewing the RESAP (Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program), progress of the bidding for this summer's construction work plan projects, equipment, safety training, the February transmission line outage affecting all members on the Kabetogama and International Falls substations and upcoming 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 \$3.67/gallon = **\$73.40**
More than 22 days of electricity for your entire home = **\$73.40***

*Based on North Star Electric average residential usage of 875 kWh per month at the residential rate of \$.11/kWh + Minnkota surcharge of \$.004/kWh
(Does not include the \$38 basic service fee)



Dan Hoskins
General Manager

MANAGER'S REPORT

Ladies and gentlemen, every year North Star Electric Cooperative gives out a total of \$4,500 in different scholarships and this scholarship money is made available by unclaimed capital credits each year. This money is given to students through our own Knowledge Scholarships, which add up to \$3,000, community scholarships and a Dollars for Scholars scholarship. Wayne Haukaas, manager of member services, travels around our system to each of our local high schools to talk with senior students interested in taking a test for one of our Cooperative Knowledge scholarships. First, he has a nice discussion with them, then he gives each of them the information to learn more about their cooperative. Then in a week, he returns to those schools and tests the students who are interested in winning one of our scholarships.

This year, Wayne traveled to our area schools and visited with 55 students from our service area and handed out information to all of them. Then, he returned a week later for testing. A total of 31 interested students took the test. I am happy to report the winners of this year's North Star Electric Cooperative Knowledge Scholarships:

Tied for first place with a score of 98 percent and each receiving \$550 were: Brooke Millerbernd, Littlefork/Big Falls High School; Alli Fairchild, Littlefork/Big Falls High School; Taylor Delack, Littlefork/Big Falls High School; and DyAna Imhof, Littlefork/Big Falls High School.

Tied for second place with a score of 95 percent and each receiving \$200 were: Eric Thydean, Littlefork/Big Falls High School; and Ryan Anderson, Roseau High School.

We also drew for eight \$50 par-

ticipation gifts among the testers who scored a passing grade of 50 percent or better. This year, those eight winners were: Paul Skoglund, International Falls High School; Sofia Olesen, Indus High School; Christian Slick, Lake of the Woods High School; Licia Cress, Indus High School; Lindsay Fast, Warroad High School; Matthew Tomczak, Littlefork/Big Falls High School; Levi Marken, Lake of the Woods High School; and Chase Jones, Littlefork/Big Falls High School.

On behalf of North Star Electric Cooperative, we would like to congratulate all of the students for taking an interest in getting a chance at a scholarship to extend their education. We also would like to give them a huge thank you for taking an interest in their local electric cooperative! We realize here at North Star that our young people are the cornerstones and we will need them if we plan to continue as a viable business. So, once again, thank you to all participants!!

Well there you have it, just one of the many things in our area and in our communities that North Star Electric Cooperative stands for. Now, as we close in on our 74th annual meeting coming in October, I am here to remind you that although our views and efforts do not always see eye to eye with some member-owners, our purpose is still to provide, distribute and ensure reliable, dependable electricity at our lowest cost to our member-owners.

However, to do this, it takes a collaborative effort from a tremendous group of folks who I need to give a little shout out to – the folks behind the scenes such as the board of directors and the employee group and their many years of service to our cooperative.

Take our board of directors for instance; 139 total years of dedicated directorship from this group of seven, who have overseen a lot of changes at your cooperative. They are active within the political arena – both at the state and federal levels – and also within all of the regulation changes in our industry. They are the group who gives the general manager direction through policy of how this cooperative should operate and they always have the cooperative's, as well as member-owners', best interests in mind when making decisions. (I might add, the decisions are not always popular ones, but they are decisions that need to be made).

There are also three people who I refer to as our management staff team:

Ann Ellis, assistant general manager; Wayne Haukaas, manager of member services; and Marty Mollberg, manager of operations. These folks have been around the block and they, too, total quite a few years of experience and professionalism. They see to it that their respective departments run smoothly and ef-

ficiently and get the job done. These are our leaders!

And last but not least is our employee group. These folks are the ones who keep the (Susan Aune, 251-36-152-04) lights on, operate the business and assist you with any and all questions and advice. These folks are North Star Electric Cooperative! They live it, work it and do it professionally. They do it with dedication, pride and attitude and we believe that we are the best, because they are the best!!

God Bless you and our troops and Tanner Mollberg.
Dan

"On behalf of North Star Electric Cooperative, we would like to congratulate all of the students for taking an interest in getting a chance at a scholarship to extend their education."



North Star Electric
will be closed
Monday, May 26,
in observance of
Memorial Day
Please remember those who
sacrificed their lives for our
freedom.



Grant application deadline May 31

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

Grants will be awarded to nonprofit or community-based organizations that demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the quality of life in our region.

We would like to say **THANK YOU** to all the North Star members who are participating in the Operation Round Up program. About 80 percent of the membership is contributing to this great cause to help our local communities.



Beware of salespeople pitching energy savings from radiant barriers

The Minnesota Department of Commerce issued a consumer alert, encouraging Minnesota homeowners to think twice before installing radiant barriers in their attics. The Department's Division of Energy Resources (DER) has received reports of salespeople pitching radiant barrier products in flyers and at free dinners throughout Minnesota. The Commerce Department wants all local consumers to know that radiant barriers are not effective means to reduce heating or cooling loads in Minnesota homes.

"Many Minnesota consumers have been duped into installing radiant barriers based on false promises of substantial energy savings," said Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman. "We strongly urge all consumers to be cautious, ask questions and explore other reputable means to make their homes and businesses more energy efficient."

Radiant barriers consist of a reflective film, usually aluminum, installed over the top of attic insulation in existing homes. They are sold as an energy-saving product, with claims of significant reductions in both heating and cooling costs. However, their potential benefit is primarily in reducing air-conditioning cooling loads in warm or hot climates – particularly in southern states.

A report compiled by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory for the

U.S. Department of Energy, shows that the benefits of radiant barriers decrease significantly in northern climates. In southern cities like Miami, Florida or Texas, radiant barriers could reduce a household's utility bill by as much as \$150 per year using average residential electricity prices. But in colder climate states such as Minnesota, where annual air-conditioning loads are considerably less, savings drop to only \$10 to \$40 a year.

"The price to install a radiant barrier can be as much as \$2,000 or more," Commissioner Rothman said. (George W. Aitchison, 654-31-001-02) "But if the average household saves only \$20 per year, it would take 100 years to pay back your investment."

It's also important to note that radiant barrier products have negligible benefit in reducing heating costs. It is unlikely that most Minnesota consumers would realize any measureable energy savings from radiant barriers in attics.

The U.S. Department of Energy and the Minnesota Department of Commerce agree that, in Minnesota, implementing air sealing and adding conventional attic insulation is a cheaper and more effective means for saving energy than installing a radiant barrier. In fact, as attic insulation levels increase, the potential benefits from a radiant barrier decrease.

Source: Minnesota Department of Commerce.

Have a successful planting season rooted in safety

As farmers make plans to return to their fields for spring planting, *Safe Electricity* urges farm workers to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines.

- Always be aware of the location of power lines, and designate preplanned routes that avoid hazard areas.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are equipped with radios and communications systems that have very tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters or cultivators or raising truck beds near power lines, and never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Simply coming too close to a power line while working is dangerous as electricity can arc or “jump” to conducting material or objects, such as a ladder, pole or truck. Remember, nonmetallic materials such as lum-



ber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.

- When guy wires (a grounded wire used to stabilize utility poles) are broken, these normally neutral wires can be anything but harmless. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call the utility to fix it. Do not do it yourself. When dealing with electrical poles and wires, always call the electric utility.
- If your equipment does come into

contact with power lines, stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until the electric utility arrives.

- If leaving the cab is necessary, as in the case of fire, the proper action is to jump – not step – with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area. Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch

the equipment before the power has been shut off.

Managers should make sure full-time and seasonal workers are educated on these safety precautions, and danger areas need to be thoroughly identified and labeled.

For more electrical safety information, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



Fixing up your home? We can help.



Minnesota Housing partners with Border State Bank to provide loans for repairs, remodeling, installation of electric off-peak heat, and energy saving improvements. The Minnesota Housing Fix Up loan program offers affordable fixed interest rates with loan amounts up to \$50,000.

Go green and save! Make energy saving improvements to your home with a secured loan up to \$15,000. This loan has no income limit and repayment terms go up to 20 years.



Looking for energy savings ideas? Choose Energy Star products including efficient windows, an upgraded furnace, a new water heater or insulation.

Get started on a loan today by contacting your local Border State Bank:



Baudette
Roseann Swenson - NMLS #530659
Amanda Risser - NMLS #530660
218.634.3300
www.borderstatebank.com

International Falls
Molly K. Bragg - NMLS #690519
218.283.5556



Use caution when burning ditches

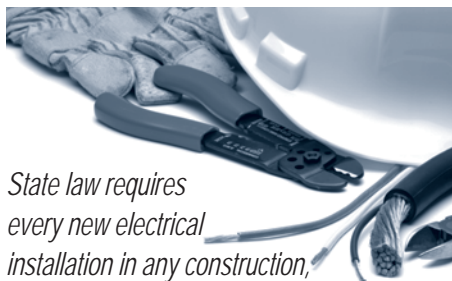
Careless ditch burning can destroy utility poles and junction boxes, leading to unnecessary power outages. Pole damage ranges from surface charring to destruction, and may cost



landowners anywhere from \$2,000 on up, depending on the location of the pole and the severity of the damage.

Please use extreme caution when burning around our electrical equipment, and always tend to a fire once it is lit. Let's all do our part to keep the lights on and costs down.

Current Electrical Inspectors



State law requires every new electrical installation in any construction, remodeling, replacement or repair shall file a certificate for inspection with the State Board of Electricity and be inspected by a Minnesota electrical inspector.

St. Louis and Koochiching counties

Chip Jespersen

Phone: (218) 327-5987

New hours: will take calls Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Inspection will be on Tuesday and Thursday only.

Roseau and Lake of the Woods counties

Scott Stenvik

16409 State Hwy 1 N.W.

Thief River Falls, MN 56701

Phone: (218) 689-5406

7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

(Monday through Friday)

Who can wire what and where

Electrical inspections are a must

Before you begin a wiring project, be sure you look into Minnesota Law. The law states that all electrical wiring shall be done by qualified licensed electrical contractors.

However, the "owner" is exempt from electrical contracting license requirements. This only applies to electrical work performed by the owner on single family residences and associated structures. Both primary and secondary residences, such as lake homes are included. However, the exemption does not apply to condominiums, rental properties and wiring not used for residential purposes (business including farming).

An associated structure could be a detached garage, gazebo, small lawn and garden shed, but does not include the 50 x 100 machine shed for the combine.

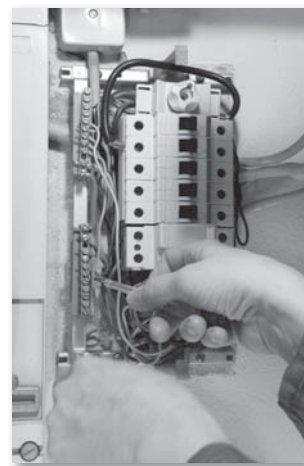
Minnesota Statutes, Section 326.01 defines an "owner" as "a natural person who physically performs electrical work on premises the person owns and actually occupies as a residence or owns and will occupy as a resi-

dence upon completion of construction."

Safety is always our biggest concern so before you start any type of the above wiring, play it safe and call your state electrical inspector. This phone call will accomplish a lot because the "owner exemption" does not exempt the owner from getting electrical wiring inspected. (Kevin C. Marble, 786-02-004-02) In this case the owner is no different than the licensed electrical contractor who must get their workmanship looked at as well.

Advance contact with the electrical inspector will save you headaches later. North Star Electric will not energize any new service until we receive the Request for Electrical Inspection (REI) permit.

REI permits and information on wiring requirements are available at www.electricity.state.mn.us.



Congratulations to this year's winners!

North Star would like to thank all the students who took the time to study and take the test, which was about North Star Electric and rural electric cooperatives. The students who took the test were: Lancaster – Drew Olsonawski; Roseau – Ryan Anderson; Warroad – Lindsay Fast; Lake of the Woods – Christian Slick, Janie Sipe, Wilson Kasberger, Samantha Plutko, Stephanie Stavig, Jasmine Draper, Levi Marken and Matthew Schmisek; Indus – Sofia Olesen, Licia Cress and Amber Zoupas; Littlefork/Big Falls – Taylor DeLack, Brooke Millerbernd, DyAna Imhof, Alli Fairchild, Eric Thydean, Matthew Tomczak, Karli Little, Marissa Siltman, Karsyn Wendt, Chase Jones, Chandan Ryan Street and Jacob Franz; International Falls – Jacob Ettestad, Ian Rautio, Whitney Gearhart, Wyatt Ulrich and Paul Skoglund. These scholarships were made possible from funding of unclaimed capital credits.

Scholarship Winners

FIRST PLACE (4-WAY TIE)

		SCORE
Brooke Millerbernd	Littlefork/Big Falls	98%
Alli Fairchild	Littlefork/Big Falls	98%
Taylor Delack	Littlefork/Big Falls	98%
DyAna Imhof	Littlefork/Big Falls	98%

SECOND PLACE

Eric Thydean	Littlefork/Big Falls	95%
Ryan Anderson	Roseau	95%



Staff Report

Marty Mollberg
Manager of Operations

It's looking like a repeat of last year, a long, drawn-out winter and a short, cold spring. Let's hope for a long, warm summer!

With the road restrictions on and the frost going out of the roads, we have stopped changing out the rejected poles that were found during testing earlier last fall. We will continue when conditions improve.

We have begun our annual line inspection of our distribution system as well as our underground transformers and cabinet inspection out of the Wheeler and Littlefork substations.

We have a busy work plan scheduled again this year! Starting on the east end of our system, we will replace 3.5 miles of poles and wire from Brown's Corner to Ericsburg. From the Kinmont Tower going south to Ulland Pit on Highway 53, we will replace and upgrade 5 miles

of poles and wire. We will also upgrade a 1-mile stretch of poles and wire on the Anchorage Road in Rainy Lake.

On the west end of the system, we will upgrade 3 miles of line starting on County Road 2, 7 miles north of Williams going east to Wintersett Park. On Trunk Highway 172 north near our office, we will also convert .8 miles of overhead to underground cable on Noble Drive.

If you have any questions about the projects, feel free to contact us. Also, if you have a medical condition (ex. oxygen) or other related condition, please contact us with the proper information as soon as possible so we can add you to the Emergency Contact List; we will do our best to limit the outage times as much as possible.

Until next time, stay safe!



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.
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651-296-8881
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Senator Rod Skoe

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651-296-4196
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Senator LeRoy Stumpf

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651-296-8660
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888-727-0979
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Giving kids the power to save

North Star Electric distributes energy-savings kits to area schools

Rarely can elementary school students say they saved their family money by finishing a homework assignment.

But with the help of a grown-up and the right supplies and instructions from their local electric co-op, students were finding energy and cash savings.

Through the PowerSavers Conservation Improvement Program, North Star Electric presented students at area schools with an energy savings kit packed full of CFL bulbs, low-flow showerheads and high-efficiency faucet aerators. If all the energy efficient devices were installed, the household could expect to save up to 1,700 kilowatt-hours (kWh) or \$200 each year.

The utilities in the PowerSavers program contacted elementary school teachers and invited them to participate in the energy-savings kit project this year. Nearly 800 kits were distributed to students in Minnesota school districts throughout the Minnkota Power Cooperative service area.

Upon completing all the tasks in the kit and filling out a brief worksheet, students received a free LED nightlight. The class with the highest percentage of participation and most kWh savings received a pizza party or money donated to a field trip.

Even without the grand prize, the kits and presentation have the full endorsement of the students, who enthusiastically inspected the hot water gauge, shower flow meter and other energy-saving devices.

Minnesota cooperatives and municipals in Minnkota's service area started PowerSavers in 2008 in an effort to meet standards for energy efficiency and conservation in the state. The group has programs and incentives available for qualifying residential and commercial consumers.

Lisa Pickard, Minnkota energy conservation coordinator, said the goal of the project is to help students learn where electricity comes from and why it's important not to waste it.

"Kids sometimes feel there isn't much they can



Scott Jean with his fifth grade class at Littlefork/Big Falls School.



Ron Rudd and Jeni Krause with their fifth grade class at the Lake of the Woods School.

do financially to help out around the house," Pickard said. "What we're trying to show them is that every little bit adds up."

The group is pleased with the way students and classrooms are responding to the program so far.

"This is a great way for us to talk to new generations of electric consumers about how energy is produced and how it can be used more efficiently," Pickard said.

The winner at Lake of the Woods School was the fifth grade class of Jeni Krause and Ron Rudd, which saved 2,543 kWh/year. The winner at Littlefork/Big Falls School was the fifth grade class of Scott Jean, which saved 12,800 kWh/year.

