

2014

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



Before the annual meeting about 375 members enjoy an excellent turkey dinner prepared by the Lake of the Woods School.



It was a busy time at the registration tables with 165 members registering for prizes.

Steve Arnesen, board member from District 1 and board president, welcomes members to North Star Electric's 74th annual meeting.



The Sloughgrass Band from Birchdale entertains the crowd before the meeting.

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2014 prize winners

\$50 – Jack Howdahl	\$100 – Tom Levasseur	\$100 – William Lockner	\$250 – Roger Birkeland
\$50 – Harvey Lehman	\$100 – Mary Moe	\$100 – Gary Arnold	\$500 – Marsha Plutko
\$50 – Dale Wilmer	\$100 – Richard Corle	\$100 – Rubelle Towne	
\$50 – William Olson	\$100 – Don Robertson	\$100 – Stephen Lavalla	
\$50 – Jim Jewell	\$100 – Reynold Lofgren	\$100 – William Boelk	

(continued on page 6)

NOVEMBER 2014

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Secretary-Treasurer Michael Hanson
Directors Julian Brzoznowski, Randy Bergan, Lorraine Nygaard, Mike Trueman
General Manager Dan Hoskins
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Monday through Friday

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Littlefork 218-278-6658 or 888-258-2008

For credit card payment, call 855-874-5354.
Online billing information available via SmartHub app.

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 clean, affordable, electric energy and other beneficial services while maintaining the very highest standards of performance and member satisfaction.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Highlights from the **BOARDROOM**

These are the highlights from the board of directors' Oct. 1 meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition, the board reviewed a proposed rate for EVs (electric vehicles) to charge during off-peak periods, approved CEO Hoskins' travel to the NRECA CEO Conference and reviewed Safety Policy 3.10.

Staff reports included the financial report, capital credit retirement checks/bill credits, medical insurance rates/alternatives, electronic time sheets, energy assistance, completion of audit field work, load management, dual heat sales/rebates, the solar demonstration project, Operation Round Up, annual meeting plans, housing needs in the Baudette area, new services/upgrades, contracted

line construction, the Lake of the Woods County Road 17 project, safety training, safety reaccreditation, pole and oil-circuit-recloser testing and upcoming events. Reports were heard from delegates Arnesen and Bergan from the Minnkota and Square Butte cooperative meetings, and Director Brzoznowski reported on the NRECA Region 5/6 meeting.

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 \$2.99/gallon = **\$59.80**
More than 18 days of electricity for your entire home = **\$59.80***

*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)

Billing dates and due date change

We are moving to a month-end meter reading date, so bills will be mailed and due 10 days later than in the past.



"Like us" on
facebook

www.facebook.com/NorthStarElectric



Dan Hoskins
General Manager

MANAGER'S REPORT

Ladies and gentlemen, as we head into another winter season, I hope all of you have taken the time to get all your ducks in a row concerning your heating system. We reminded you a couple of months ago, but just in case, this is also a gentle reminder, "Get 'r done!"

The 74th annual meeting of the membership was a success. It was definitely an annual meeting with things to remember, such as the wind, the snow, the sleet, the road conditions, the road construction, cancellation of our guest speaker, Mac McLennan, because airplanes couldn't fly very well in those conditions and the same for our attorney. Also, U.S. Congressman Collin Peterson couldn't make it because his plane was grounded, and we started the meeting about 20 minutes late because the buses were delayed.

Aside from all of that, the good news is we still had 375 members make it for supper and 165 members registered for the meeting. Because of all the folks who made it to the meeting, and the fact that Ann's financial report along with the audit report says that your cooperative is in great shape financially and strong physically, our meeting was a success!

As announced by the president of the board, Steve Arnesen, this was my last annual meeting as your general manager, as I plan to retire at the end of July 2015. This was a very special meeting for me because not only was this our 74th annual meeting, it just happened to be the 39th wedding anniversary for me and my wife, Sharon. Also in attendance this year was our son, Sharbee, and his fiancée, Michelle, our daughter, Brittany, and our son-in-law, Scott, and two little people who I talk a lot about, my grandson, Hudson, and my granddaughter, Harper. This was very special for me and Sharon.

I was humbled by the presence of not one, not two, not three but four other general managers at our annual meeting. Darrick Moe, president & CEO of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association in Maple Grove, Minn., his wife, Robin, and their son, Rick; Mike Monsrud, president & CEO of Itasca-Mantrap in Park Rapids and his wife, Sue; Bruce Bjerke, general manager of Clearwater-Polk Electric Cooperative in Bagley and his wife, Debbie; and all the way from Langdon, N.D., manager of Cavalier Rural Electric Cooperative, Duane Otto, and his wife, Beverly. I was quite surprised that they braved this cold, nasty weather, but I was so appreciative of their presence.

I was also surprised with the presentation of a nice

plaque to me by Monsrud, who sits on the Line School's advisory board, for my role in getting the M-State Baudette line school going in Lake of the Woods County. I am here to tell you that all I had was an idea that would help out an industry that has been so good to me and bring some economic development to our area. The real credit goes to our board of directors at North Star Electric Cooperative for being so supportive of this idea, to M-State Wadena, and to the dean there, Monty Johnson, for agreeing that this could actually work! Without them, this whole thing would be a bust. Other entities or people who played a very large part in this were Mayor Rick Rone and the city council of Baudette, the Lake of the Woods County Commission, the Baudette Industrial Development Association and the Economic Development Director, along with the Lake of the Woods High School and the seven folks (you know who you are) who sat on the board that helped me steer this thing. This whole group, moving in the same direction, working together with a common goal, was the epitome of teamwork, which is what cooperatives are all about; working together cooperatively, and this group did it!

Folks, Brad Dolinski is our AMI/CAD mapping person in our office and he does excellent work with both of those jobs. But what a lot of you don't know is that Brad is an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) for our local fire department, which is a volunteer position. You see, we like it when our employees show an interest in our communities, and we allow any of our employees to be a part of our communities in any way they can. Brad chose a profession that I can relate to because I was also a member of our volunteer fire and ambulance squads in North Dakota for 23 years. Anyway, Brad is a hero! And I am very thankful that Brad was where he was at a time of need, and if you look into this edition of the *Enlightener*, you will find an article on Brad saving the life of a stranger. Why, because that's what he does – trained to help, anyway possible. Thank you, Brad!

Now my final thought for today is about this winter's electric bill. Sit and think about what electricity means to your home, your business and your own wellbeing. This is a tireless workhorse, a form of energy that works for us at our beckon command, whether to run your TV, make coffee for you, wash your clothes, cook your meal or heat your home, plus many other things. No matter what the call, hit the switch and electricity goes to work for you. So when that electric bill comes, just remember, there is not another form of energy that does so much for so little!

God bless you and our troops, Dan

North Star Electric 75th anniversary celebration

Scheduled for June 23

Mark your calendars, as North Star Electric will be hosting a 75th anniversary celebration on Tuesday, June 23, at the cooperative headquarters in Baudette. We will serve food and beverages, offer building tours, showcase our equipment, provide activities for the kids and give away prizes. More details of the event will be available in the coming months. We are looking for members who may have old cooperative photos, memorabilia and stories to share for projects we are creating in honor of our 75 years. We would like to hear from any member who can remember when their lights were turned on for the first time or who have unique stories about how electricity changed their lives. We plan to use these items/information to create displays and publish articles. Please note that any photo and memorabilia submitted to the cooperative will be returned to their owners as soon as the event is over.

75 Years

North Star Electric Cooperative electric heating rebate program!



Incentives available for installation of an off-peak electric heating system

North Star Electric is now offering a Powerful Value rebate in addition to the PowerSaver Conservation (CIP) rebate program. These rebates are for the installation of new off-peak equipment or replacement of existing off-peak equipment. This is part of Minnkota Power's Powerful Value campaign.

Members can receive a rebate of \$20 per kW of electric heat or \$100/\$200 per ton of heat pump equipment installed. The Powerful Value rebates are limited to \$600 total per off-peak meter. Please note that the Powerful Value rebates can be paired with the PowerSaver incentive to create an even larger rebate total.

The Powerful Value rebates are designed to assist members adding more off-peak electric heating equipment to our system. The qualifying equipment includes items such as plenum heaters, baseboard, cove, ETS, furnaces, boilers and air-source/ground-source heat pumps. This in turn will increase the system utilization or load factor, which is a measure of the efficiency of the electrical system required to meet peak demand. The higher our load factor the lower the average cost per kWh delivered or sold by the system. Minnkota Power Cooperative, our power supplier, pays out these rebates. The PowerSaver incentives are designed to meet Minnesota Legislative mandates to encourage residential and commercial members to save kWh by installing energy efficient electrical equipment. These rebates/incentives are paid out by North Star Electric. As a member of North Star Electric, you can benefit from both of these programs, which can offset a portion of the equipment cost.

For more information, please contact North Star Electric's member service department at **218-634-2202**. The rebate form for the PowerSaver rebates is available on our website at **www.northstarelectric.coop** or at our office. North Star Electric will complete the paperwork for the Powerful Value rebates when they inspect the new or replacement electrical heating equipment.

Homeowners adding new off-peak heating systems qualify for these rebates.

Any questions please contact North Star Electric Cooperative 218-634-2202.



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





Off-peak members should expect average winter control hours

Additional Young 2 energy to help limit control hours

Last winter, the so-called polar vortex sent much of the region into a deep freeze.

Even if the cold-weather phenomenon returns this winter, members who participate in the off-peak electric heating program should anticipate an average number of winter load control hours.

Minnkota Power Cooperative, your cooperative's wholesale power provider, estimates 240 hours of dual-heat load control this winter. This compares to the 10-year average of 255 hours and last year's total of 301 hours.

The key difference from last year is that Minnkota has increased its purchase of energy from the Young 2 power plant by about 114 megawatts capacity. As part of a long-term transaction, the additional energy from the coal-based plant will help meet peak winter demands and future load growth projections.

"The added Young 2 energy will reduce our exposure to the volatility of the wholesale energy market and should also help limit our hours of control," said Todd Sailer, Minnkota senior manager of energy supply.

Winter load control projections are based on reliable power plant operations and normal market conditions. Sailer warns that

load control estimates can change due to circumstances such as storms, power plant outages and transmission line congestion. The availability of wind resources also has the ability to impact control hours.

"If our power supply resources perform well, we will have power to serve our loads at almost all hours during the winter season," Sailer said. "The challenge comes when we have unplanned outages or during extreme cold periods when the demand for electricity is high."

Surplus energy can typically be purchased from the regional wholesale energy market at affordable prices (425-11-006-13, Sharon Forsythe). With demand skyrocketing across the Midwest last winter, prices momentarily went as high as \$2 per kWh.

"Controlling load during these periods protects consumers from the volatility of the market and prevents the need to build new power plants just to serve peak loads," Sailer said. "The savings by doing this are passed on to members through the low off-peak electric rate, which is approximately half of the regular retail rate."

An off-peak system consists of an electric heating source as its primary component. A supplemental heating source will

need to operate several hundred hours or more during the winter season. 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 ability to manage costs and plan for the heating season is one of the many benefits of the off-peak electric heating program," Sailer said.

Millions of dollars have been saved due to the successful operation of Minnkota's load management system over the past 36 years.

"Load management is a vital tool for Minnkota and the associated systems to use to keep wholesale power prices competitive and winter heating bills low for retail consumers," Sailer said.

Electric heat rebates available

Great new incentives are available for the installation of qualifying electric heating equipment. 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 hard-wired; plug-in systems are not eligible.

Some restrictions apply. Please contact North Star Electric's member services department for more information.

CUTTING SOME ENERGY COSTS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



Holiday shopping fliers and glittering lights can mean only one thing ... the holiday season is upon us! This year, consider giving yourself the gift of energy efficiency as you decorate your home for the holidays.

Holiday lighting takes many shapes and forms. Whether you prefer simple lighting or something more elaborate, it all starts with the selection of the lights you choose. If you are shopping around for new holiday lighting this year, be sure to check out a safer and smarter lighting option – LEDs.

With LED holiday lighting, you can save money by using less energy. Although LED lights may be a little more expensive to purchase, they use less energy and last longer than regular lights. They can last up to 100,000 hours indoors. Plus LED lighting comes in a variety of shapes and colors.

Since LED lights do not run as hot as mini-lights, they are not as dangerous, and you can string more strands together. There are also LED lights that are made for both indoor and outdoor use.

No matter what lights you choose to buy, look for the blue ENERGY STAR® label. ENERGY STAR® products can use up to 70 percent less energy and can last up to 10 times longer than other products, according to ENERGY STAR®.

Another way to save energy is to shut off the lights when they are not needed (362-17-006-02, Kathryn Davis). For example, turn off lights during the daylight, when you are away from home, and before you go to bed. For your convenience, consider investing in a timer that will automatically turn on and off your lights at a set time.

The cheapest, cleanest and greenest energy is the energy not used. You can use garlands of popcorn, reflective ornaments, tinsel, ribbons and wreaths to help you decorate more efficiently. For more tips on energy efficiency, visit EnergyEdCouncil.org.

ANNUAL MEETING

HIGHLIGHTS *(continued from page 1)*

Dan Hoskins receives a plaque from Mike Monsrud, president & CEO from Itasca-Mantrap and M-State Line School's advisory board. This plaque was presented to Dan for the role that he played in getting the M-State Linemen's training school started in Baudette.



North Star members listen to a presentation during the annual meeting.

Dan Hoskins, North Star general manager, presents Marsha Plutko with the grand prize, a \$500 energy credit.



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.

• Lake of the Woods, St. Louis and Koochiching counties:

Curt Collier (cgcclier67@gmail.com)

Phone: (218) 966-5070

Call to set up an appointment between 7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

• Roseau county:

Scott Stenvik

Phone: (218) 689-5406

Call to set up an appointment between 7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)



Celebrate with savings

Buy energy efficient Christmas lights and decorations

How to apply:

1. Purchase LED Christmas plug-in (not battery operated) lights and decorations in 2014.
2. Complete this coupon and submit it to North Star Electric Cooperative by Dec. 31, 2014, with your **original** sales receipt and the LED packaging showing the ENERGY STAR® logo and number of lights per string.
3. Strings must be 100 or fewer lights.
4. \$3/string of lights, maximum of 5 strings per customer. Rebate cannot exceed price of LED string per package.



Name _____ City/Zip _____

Account # _____ Phone # _____

Address _____

Number of Strings	Rebate per string	Total Rebate

Mail to: North Star Electric Cooperative •
P.O. Box 719 • Baudette, MN 56623

Co-op worker answers calls for help

By: *Derrill Holly* | ECT Staff Writer



Brad Dolinski receives a plaque from Steve Arnesen, president of the North Star Electric board. This plaque was presented to Brad for using his training as an EMT to save the life of a stranger while attending a conference last month.

Brad Dolinski of North Star Electric Cooperative used his lifesaving skills to help a hotel employee who stopped breathing.

"When a hotel employee came out screaming, 'We need an EMT!' I glanced around and no one was running over that way," Dolinski recalled. "So I went in."

In addition to his job at the Baudette, Minn., co-op handling mapping and purchasing duties and meter technician work, Dolinski also serves as an emergency medical technician for the local fire department – a volunteer

role encouraged and supported by his co-op.

On that fateful day Sept. 30, when a Bloomington, Minn., hotel employee collapsed, his lifesaving skills came in handy.

"She was having obvious medical issues, so I started doing an emergency assessment and as I was talking to her, she lost consciousness and became unresponsive," said Dolinski.

"Her heart stopped beating, she wasn't breathing and her eyes rolled back, so I started [cardiopulmonary resuscitation] immediately. Less than 30 seconds after I began CPR, she was talking to us again."

Meanwhile, conference organizers also called 911. Dolinski and several other conference attendees stayed with the woman until the local emergency crew arrived. A representative of another co-op stayed on the line with emergency dispatchers until the woman was taken to the hospital. Hotel managers recently notified Dolinski that the woman has since made a full recovery.

"It's always important that someone steps up and helps," said Dolinski. "It could be someone's mother or sister."

Dolinski told ECT.coop that managers at North Star Electric Cooperative have made community involvement and volunteering important parts of the culture for the co-op and its staff.

"They've allowed me to be part of the fire department and the ambulance squad," Dolinski said. "When I have to get up and leave my desk to go help out with emergency situations, they allow me to do that. It gives me opportunities to help people when they need it most."



STAFF REPORT



Ann Ellis
Assistant General Manager/
Finance Manager

Energy independence

Although it was in nearly a blink of the eye, gas prices in town recently went below \$3/gallon. I remember as a kid watching Dad ask the station attendant to fill 'er up for 33.9 cents/gallon. When we were on a road trip, it was like a scavenger hunt to find the best-priced filling station. Because it was a game, I was paying attention, or maybe I was just a little nerd.

I also remember hearing promises of energy independence a few years later after images on TV showed cars lined up in cities waiting for that precious, and high-demand, gasoline. Every president since then has set an energy independence goal, but how have we done? Well, not very well, until recently, thanks to our neighboring state where advanced drilling techniques, like fracking and horizontal drilling in the Bakken formation, have resulted in higher natural gas and oil production. This has made a significant difference in reducing the U.S. reliance on imported energy – significant enough that our importing level is back to those of the mid-1980s. In 2005, we imported about 30 percent of our energy, and the U.S. Energy Information Administration (www.eia.gov) indicates we are on a pace to reduce our imports to just 4 percent by 2040. We are on the right track now, because in the first half of 2014, imports were down to 10 percent of our nation's energy consumption, and that is a great start! Way to go, North Dakota!

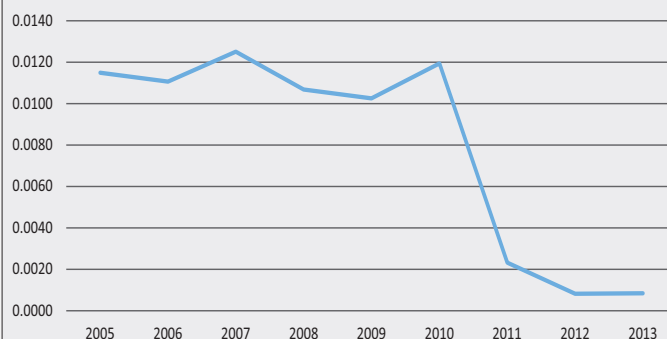
Our other local, homegrown energy is lignite coal. As you've heard us say over and over, it remains under attack, in spite of great strides made to reduce emissions. **Take a look at the graphs printed here.** They show very impressive results at the Milton R. Young Station, our primary generation resource, but the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) wants more? How much "more" can you and I afford, and how much difference will it even make? We have

until Dec. 1 to let our voices be heard at the EPA. If you have Internet access and want some balance in the EPA's decisions, just go to www.action.coop. If you don't have Internet access, just let us know, and we will see that your voice is heard.

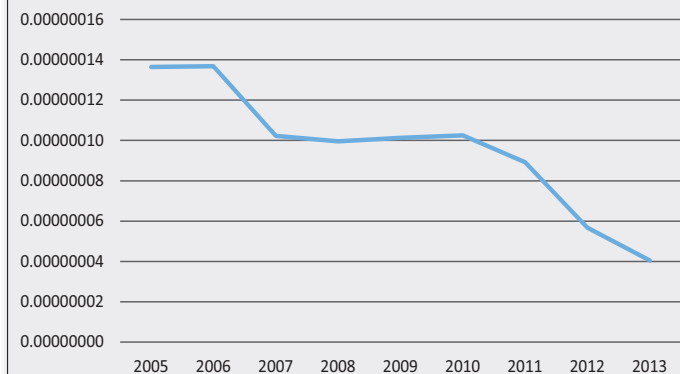
Supply and demand

If you have a propane tank, I hope one of your winter-preparation projects has been to fill it. If you don't have off-peak electric heat, I hope that you have checked out the half-priced electricity for home and business heating. We are now offering rebates when members put in new, or even replace old, off-peak electric heat (121-35-026-03, Brett Janicke). The half-priced rate can be offered because when electricity is in high demand, and very expensive, Minnkota Power Cooperative will turn off your electric heat, but you will stay warm with your backup heating system, like propane. In each of the last nine years, off-peak heat has been controlled about 250 hours. Give us a call to discuss what options could work well for you.

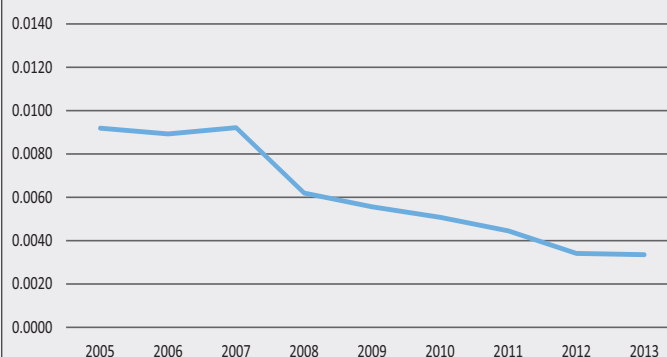
Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) pounds per net kWh



Mercury (HG) pounds per net kWh



Nitrogen Oxide (NO_x) pounds per net kWh



Scams

Beware of phone scams of all sorts. If it sounds threatening (or too good to be true), call law enforcement to report the suspicious call. North Star will never call and ask you for personal information, so never give it out when someone calls YOU. You know our number, so call US, and we will be very happy to help you.

Thank you to our veterans

It's really great to have a special day set aside to honor our vets who have fought for our many freedoms, but hopefully we take the time to

THANKS
giving

North Star's office will be closed
Thursday, Nov. 27, and Friday, Nov. 28,
in observance of Thanksgiving.



personally thank them all year long. I can't imagine the sacrifices they and their families made, but we can all go out of our way when we see one of our troops, shake their hand, and say 'Thank You,' no matter what day of the year it is. At your service, we remain Ann

DIGGING SOON?



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

Visit www.call811.com
for more information.

NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE POLITICAL LEADERS

Federal legislators

President Barack Obama

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

Senator Al Franken

320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
www.alfranken.com
202-224-5641
Fax: 202-224-0044

Senator Amy Klobuchar

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

Congressman Rick Nolan

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

Congressman Collin Peterson

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

State of Minnesota legislators

Governor Mark Dayton

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

Senator Tom Bakk

75 Rev. Dr. Martin
Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol Building, Room 226
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
651-296-8881
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Senator Rod Skoe

75 Rev. Dr. Martin
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Senator LeRoy Stumpf

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Representative Dan Fabian

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Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-9635
888-727-0979
rep.dan.fabian@house.mn



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

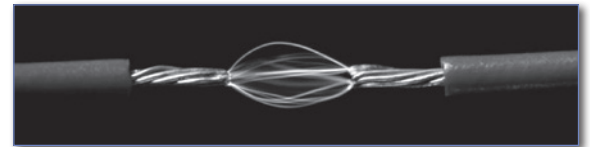
Check your home to prevent **ELECTRICAL FIRES**

Safe Electricity offers the following checklist to help you prevent electrical fires in your home:

- ☑ **Electrical outlets** – Check for loose-fitting plugs. Replace missing or broken wall plates so wiring and components are not exposed. If you have young children, cover unused outlets with safety caps or install tamper resistant outlets (TROs). TROs have a built in safety feature that won't allow any object in the outlet except for electrical plugs. If an outlet is not working, it may be an indicator of unsafe wiring. Have an electrician check it out.
- ☑ **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)** – Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, workshop, basement, garage and outdoor outlets. GFCIs help protect against electrical shock. Use the test and reset button monthly to ensure they are working properly.
- ☑ **Plugs** – Never force plugs into outlets. Do not remove the grounding pin to make a three-prong plug fit a two-conductor outlet. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.
- ☑ **Cords** – Make sure cords are not frayed or cracked, placed under carpets or rugs, tightly wrapped around any object or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors or other objects.
- ☑ **Extension cords** – These are not intended as permanent household wiring, so use them on a temporary basis only. If you find you need more electrical outlets, talk to an electrician about installing more so you will not need to use extension cords.
- ☑ **Light bulbs** – Check the wattage to

make sure light bulbs match the fixture requirements. Replace bulbs that have higher wattage ratings than recommended on the fixture. Make sure they are screwed in securely so they do not overheat.

- ☑ **Appliances/Electronics** – If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or has given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced. Look for cracks or damage in wiring and connectors. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics. Make sure your appliances and electronics are placed in dry locations. If an appliance has been water damaged, be sure to replace it.
- ☑ **Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs)** – Consider having AFCIs installed in your home. An AFCI is installed in a circuit breaker and monitors the flow of electricity throughout your home. If the AFCI detects any abnormality, it will shut the system off, preventing a fire.
- ☑ **Electrical wiring** – Check for loose wall receptacles, loose wires or loose lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. If light switches are hot to the touch or lights spark and flicker, immediately shut them off at the circuit breaker and then contact a qualified electrician to make repairs.
- ☑ **Circuit breakers/fuses** – Check that circuit breakers are working properly. Fuses should be properly rated for the circuit they are protecting.
- ☑ **Service capacity** – As you continue to upgrade your home with more lighting, appliances and electronics, your home's electrical service capacity may become overburdened. If fuses blow or trip



frequently, you may need to increase the capacity of your electrical service or add new branch circuits. A qualified electrician can determine the appropriate service requirements for your home.

For more information on electrical safety in your home, visit SafeElectricity.org.

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