

Unclaimed capital credits donated to more local nonprofit organizations



Lorraine Nygaard, board member from District 6, presents a check to Joan Nelson for the Big Falls Fire Department.



Robyn Hasbargen, representing the Birchdale Fire Department, receives a check from Mike Hanson, board member from District 4.



Jack Charlton, representing the Williams Arena, receives a check from Randy Bergan, board member from District 3.



Velma Lund and Judy Senkyr, representing the Williams Senior Center, receive a check from Randy Bergan, board member from District 3.



Randy Bergan, board member from District 3, presents a check to Jan Reilly for the Lake of the Woods Humane Society.



Lorraine Nygaard, board member from District 6, presents a check to Tom Abendroth for the Big Falls American Legion.

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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 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' Dec. 3 meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine motions, the board voted to approve Manager Dan Hoskins' travel to the NRECA annual meeting, to change the February board meeting to Feb. 6 to accommodate a legislative meeting conflict, to change the April board meeting date to March 26, the afternoon before the Minnkota annual meeting, to approve exchanging the Christmas Eve holiday with the day after Christmas.

Staff reports included the financial report, the depreciation of the AMR (automated meter reading) system, changing medical insurance carriers the first of the year, the progress of the MyMeter software installation, which will allow members to monitor daily usage and receive alerts if usage falls outside limits established by the member, five-day bridge financing needed because of the due date changes for the wholesale power bill and the now-later receipts for the retail sales, load management, dual heat sales, distributed generation, CIP conservation rebates and output

from the demonstration solar system at the Baudette office. Assistant Manager Ann Ellis presented the 2015 budget, which includes a 5 percent rate increase to coincide with the Minnkota rate increase. There is no change to the basic service fee recommended, and the price per kWh would increase 6.7 percent with those two components averaging out to an overall increase in revenue of 5 percent starting April 1.

Board reports included a very favorable summary by Director Julian Brzoznowski of the CFC Directors' workshop held in Bemidji and a recap of the Minnkota board meeting by Delegate Steve Arnesen. At that meeting the Minnkota board approved a 5 percent rate increase to become effective April 1, 2015.

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 \$2.09/gallon = **\$41.80**
More than 13 days of electricity for your entire home = **\$41.80***

*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)



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www.facebook.com/NorthStarElectric



Dan Hoskins
General Manager

MANAGER'S REPORT

Well I hope all of you had a very nice Christmas season and you were able to celebrate, in your own way, the coming of the New Year. In my household, we ended the year by gaining a new daughter-in-law! Yep, on Dec. 13, 2014, (aka 12-13-14), our son, Sharbee, married a very nice lady by the name of Michelle Fricke, and it was such a nice wedding. Sharon and I are so happy to welcome Michelle into our family, and now Michelle will find out what kind of "outlaws" we really are!

So now I ask you each year about your resolutions, whether you are going to quit this or quit that, lose this or try to lose that or do this and don't do that. Well, I have tried most of them, and they last just a short time, but it's fun to come into the New Year and go gung-ho for about three-four days, and then say the heck with it! So, good luck with your resolutions!

Well, I suppose we should get to a little business. 2015 is going to be extra special because your cooperative is 75 years old this year! Yep, that's right, on June 23, 2015, we will be 75 years old and we do plan on a celebration. Hopefully each month leading up to the June 23 celebration we will have a little history lesson about your cooperative in the monthly issues of our *Enlightener*.

So since it is North Star's birthday, we will start with us. Let's start first by recognizing some of those from our area who made it possible, and to do this, we must go way back. Norman Clementson, A.N. Grems, Andrew Grazin, Chris Christensen, William Rivard, Nels Hallberg, Albert Gillie, Peter Sorensen, Edgar Bratton, Emil Ramberg and Joe Rowell all met on June 23, 1940, upstairs in the Spooner (aka east Baudette) auditorium with more than 300 people in attendance, and North Star Electric was born.

Norman Clementson was elected president, William Rivard as vice president, A.N. Grems as secretary and Edgar Bratton as treasurer. Frank Timm was named attorney and a membership fee of \$5 was approved, with a minimum of \$3.50 for 40 kWh being agreed upon for each consumer. The directors deliberated over a selection of project coordinators, and Mr. Clarence Peterson of Pitt accepted the position.

So there is a short bit of history on North Star and some of the folks who helped kick it off. If you recognize those folks and are possibly related to them down the line, you can be proud of the work they did!

Ok, back to reality. When you received your bill for November, I am sure you just about passed out. I know a lot of you called the office and I am sure that our folks here answered your questions, but just in case some of you didn't call, here's a short reason why the bills were just a tad bit more than you may have expected.

First of all, if you hadn't noticed the temperature in November, it was cold (429-45-151-05, David Kilmer). How cold

you ask? Well, November was the second-coldest November on record, so that for one is a good start.

Secondly, Minnkota moved its billing date 10 days ahead to match the month end, and because of that, we also had to adjust, and we did it over the course of six months last summer so it wouldn't hit you all at once. The November bill you received last year covered Oct. 20 to Nov. 20, but this year the billing was the full month of November which, as I stated, was cold!

You know, as your manager, there is a comfort of working with and alongside a group of experienced professionals like our board of directors who are as dedicated to your cooperative as they come. With all the issues and things going on in our industry, this is the group that we want directing us into the future. So here is a very short synopsis, composed by me, of our directors:

District 1 - Steve Arnesen, president of the board: Steve is co-owner of a very successful resort on Lake of the Woods, Rocky Point Resort in Roosevelt, Minn., and along with his business skills, Steve brings 28 years of experience to the table.

District 2 - Mike Trueman, board member: Mike is a retired successful resort owner on the Rainy River and Lake of the Woods. Mike not only brings his business knowledge and success, but also 12 years of experience to the board table.

District 3 - Randy Bergan, board member: Randy is a retired successful farmer from the Williams, Minn., area. Randy brings his patience from farming, his experience from other boards that he served on, as well as 16 years of experience on the North Star board.

District 4 - Mike Hanson, secretary/treasurer of the board: Mike is a retired Koochiching County commissioner from Birchdale, Minn., and is well-versed in the political arena. Mike's experience and his connections in the political arena are second to none. Mike also brings 20 years of experience to the table.

District 5 - Bruce Polkinghorne, vice president of the board: Bruce is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and a retired successful business owner who brings business sense along with 25 years of experience to the table.

District 6 - Lorraine Nygaard, board member: Lorraine is a retired valued city auditor from Big Falls. Lorraine has many years of experience as a city auditor. She also had the pleasure of being married to a longtime director, Allan Nygaard, which allowed her to be able to stay in touch with the happenings on the board. Lorraine brings seven years of experience to the table.

District 7 - Julian Brzoznowski, board member: Julian is a retired successful farmer and business owner from the Kabetogama area. Julian is our most seasoned director being on the board for more than 31 years, and along with his business background, his political sense and being a successful farmer, he has stayed abreast of all issues that have come before the cooperative.

God bless you and our troops,
Dan

Statement of nondiscrimination

North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs).

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program_intake@usda.gov.

SNOWMOBILERS

Beware of hazards! Respect property rights!

As snowmobiling becomes more popular, the numbers of accidents are increasing. Very few accidents occur on Minnesota's trail system. Most accidents occur along roads and ditches. Obstacles encountered along roads and other cleared rights of way can be very dangerous, especially in low visibility conditions.

North Star Electric Cooperative and other Minnkota Power Cooperative-associated systems have poles, guy wires, metal enclosures and pedestals installed on hundreds of miles of rights of way. When snowmobiling, be aware of these obstacles. Guy wires need special attention as they can be difficult to see.

Some snowmobilers are mistaking the

private property where electric transmission lines are located for snowmobile trails. North Star Electric and other Minnkota-associated systems have been granted easements to build and maintain lines in these cleared areas, but the land still belongs to the landowner. Be sure to check with the landowners before snowmobiling on their property.

Enjoy snowmobiling in Minnesota, but keep safety in mind. Slow down, don't drink and stay alert for obstacles.



North Star, Minnkota conducting survey

North Star Electric, along with our power supplier, Minnkota Power Cooperative, is conducting a survey of residential members in January.

This survey will be used to collect data on household appliances and energy sources used in the home, as well as attitudes toward energy use and other data (362-31-002-03, Pierre Laframboise). The information gathered will be used to

help with long-term planning to ensure safe, reliable energy to our members.

A sample of residential members will be randomly selected to participate in the survey. The survey will only take 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

If your household receives a survey in the mail, please take the time to complete the survey and return it in a timely manner. Thank you!



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



The worst drug epidemic today



Written by Jason Uhler, Minnkota Safety & Training Manager



Sitting in your medicine cabinet could be America's most fatally abused drug. Nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers cost health insurers up to \$72.5 billion annually in direct health care costs. Among people 35-54 years old, unintentional drug overdoses caused more deaths than motor vehicle crashes, for the first time in history.

Of particular concern are opioid pain relievers. Opioid pain relievers contain morphine and codeine. Like heroin, they derive from the poppy plant. For years the medical community thought that opioids were the best way to treat pain, but we know other, nonaddictive medicines are just as effective.

Why are opioid pain relievers risky? According to research and National Safety Council Medical Advisor Dr. Don Teater:

- The drugs are overprescribed;
- It does not take long to become addicted;
- The drugs produce respiratory depression in addition to pain reduction;
- The amounts needed to feel pain relief as well as the amount needed to kill a person is small and unpredictable.

How big is the prescription pain reliever problem? Simply put, it is the fastest-growing drug problem in the United States.

- More than 70 percent of people who abused prescription pain relievers report getting them from friends or relatives.
- In 2010, more than 400,000 emergency room visits were made related to prescription pain relievers.
- Prescription pain relievers are the leading drug being abused by teens

and adolescents, and are a gateway drug to heroin.

What can you do? If your doctor recommends an opioid pain reliever, ask instead for a nonaddictive alternative. Make sure you have discussed your family history, including any conditions you have that could put you at an increased risk should you take opioid pain relievers. Examples include COPD, sleep apnea, depression, anxiety or a history of addiction.

Some other tips to keep your family safe from this risk include:

- Use the medicine only as directed, and consult your pharmacist if you have any questions or concerns.
- Warn your children that taking a drug that wasn't prescribed to them is just as dangerous as illegal drugs.
- Keep medications secure, and talk to grandparents about safe storage methods.
- Ask your pharmacist the best way to get rid of old pills. Many have "take back" events or information on drug disposal.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know that 90 percent of the energy used to operate a washing machine comes from using hot water? A simple switch from hot to cold can save a great deal of energy! Also, consider air drying or even line drying to save even more household energy.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



State law requires a carbon monoxide detector near every bedroom of your home

Each year, more than 200 Americans die and several thousand individuals are treated in emergency rooms for CO poisoning. The risk of CO poisoning increases during the winter, as more people run furnaces, gas space heaters and use fireplaces.

Remember – Minnesota law requires CO detectors within 10 feet of every sleeping room in all existing single-family homes. If

you haven't installed a detector yet, please don't wait. Lives may depend on it.

For more information go to www.dps.state.mn.us/fmarshal/PublicEducation or call the State Fire Marshal's office at 1-651-201-7200.



ATTENTION OFF-PEAK MEMBERS

Remember to check your backup propane or fuel oil tank level periodically during the winter heating season. It is important to always have adequate fuel reserves so your backup heating system runs during times when off-peak electric heating systems are being controlled.

If you go to our website www.northstarelectric.coop and click on off-peak then off-peak control status, you will see the current control plans and if your system is being controlled.

Reliable backup system is a must!

Electric off-peak heating systems must be capable of 500 hours or more of interruption each winter season, although this year we are expecting only 250 hours of control. "In order to realize the full benefits of the load management program, it is very important that our members work with a qualified heating contractor to ensure that they have an automatic, adequate and well-maintained backup heating system," said Wayne Haukaas, manager of compliance and member service.

The electric off-peak heating program continues to provide great value to members today, just as it did when it was first utilized in the late 1970s. The winter heating season is here, and North Star Electric stands ready to assist our members with their electric heating options.



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.

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.

State law for active duty military

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

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 (cgcclolier67@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.)



ELECTRIC OR PROPANE

Which is the best heating value?

With the price of propane this winter we are receiving several calls about which is cheaper, off-peak electric or propane. The answer this year is the same as last year, off-peak electric is still the best heating value. Of course, if you have a new super-efficient propane furnace, the costs are closer, but off-peak electric is still cheaper even with the temporary wind energy surcharge.

The efficiency of a propane furnace varies greatly depending on what type of propane furnace you have. The older style furnace with a standing pilot is only about 60 percent efficient, the midrange furnace with electronic ignition is about 80 percent efficient and the newer super-efficient furnace is about 90 percent efficient. The efficiency of these furnaces has been tested under ideal lab conditions and generally can't be duplicated after they have been installed in the home. The

new super-efficient furnace that has been properly installed in a home does come close to the furnaces that were tested in the lab.

So at what price would you need to buy propane to equal the price of off-peak electric? Once again it depends on what furnace you are using. If you had a furnace with a standing pilot, the price would need to be \$1 per gallon. For a furnace with electronic ignition, the price would need to be \$1.33 per gallon. For a super-efficient furnace, the price would need to be under \$1.50 per gallon. In early February last year the average price of propane in our service area was about \$4 per gallon so you can see that off-peak electric heat is still the best heating value for your home or business. You are a member-owner of North Star Electric Cooperative so it only makes sense for you to buy from a company that you already own.



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
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Twitter: @USRepRickNolan

Congressman Collin Peterson

2109 Rayburn House Office Building
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Fax: 202-225-1593

State of Minnesota legislators

Governor Mark Dayton

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

Coyote outage shouldn't significantly impact load control



The recent mechanical failure and fire at the Coyote Station on Dec. 4 shouldn't have a significant impact on winter load control projections for the Minnkota Power Cooperative/Northern Municipal Power Agency (NMPA) Joint System.

But damage to the plant, which is located near Beulah, N.D., will result in an economic impact for the Joint System, with the plant only being able to run at 50 percent capacity for several months until repairs are completed. The Coyote plant had been down completely but did return at half load around Christmas time.

Minnkota is our wholesale energy supplier, and serves as operating agent for NMPA (242-41-004-05, Mary

Bohn). Otter Tail Power operates Coyote, but NMPA is one of the owners.

At full Coyote plant shutdown, the Joint System loses 128 megawatts (MW) of generation and at 50 percent run capacity the generation falls to 64 MW. So the Joint System will be short 60 to 70 MW for an indefinite amount of time.

Minnkota doesn't anticipate a significant change in its original load control projection of about 250 hours this winter season. However, the Joint System will have to make additional purchases in the energy market to make up for the loss of Coyote generation and other factors this winter season.

Helping to offset the loss of Coyote generation is the additional 127.5 MW

of energy that Minnkota is receiving this winter season as opposed to last season from Unit 2 at the Milton R. Young Station near Center, N.D.

During the Dec. 4 incident, Coyote sustained major damage to a boiler feed pump and turbine drive as well as fire damage to the roof, structural steel, cabling and other equipment near the failed pump.

There have been other issues with the Minnkota/NMPA Joint System generation resources this winter season.

Young 1 was offline from Dec. 16 until Dec. 28 due to extensive steam erosion on the reheat headers for the unit. And the Langdon and Ashtabula Wind Energy Centers were limited at times due to icing.