Baudette, Minnesota

The message is clear

EPA reaffirms approval of N.D. regional haze plan

n a victory for Minnkota Power Cooperative and the state of North Dakota, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reaffirmed its approval of North Dakota's regional haze plan.

This rulemaking will allow Minnkota, our wholesale power provider, to continue to significantly reduce emission levels at the coal-based Milton R. Young Station through proven, costeffective technology. The EPA's reconsideration would have potentially implemented a federal regional haze plan, which would have required a \$500 million investment in technology that has not been proven to work on cyclone-based boilers using North Dakota lignite coal.

The EPA's reconsideration came in response to a petition by environmental law firm Earth Justice challenging the state's best available retrofit technology (BART) controls for nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions at three coal-fired electric generating units, including the two units at the Minnkota-operated Young Station near Center, N.D. The EPA said it has considered all timely significant comments and determined that the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for regional haze meets all necessary environmental requirements for good stewardship.

The state of North Dakota and Minnkota have been in an ongoing dispute with the federal EPA about the appropriate regional haze plan. The dispute centers on how the state plans to improve visibility in Class I areas like Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The regional haze program only addresses visibility; it is not a health-based program.

Minnkota has made major improvements at the Young

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Station throughout much of the last decade to address environmental concerns, including visibility issues in Class I areas. About \$425 million has already been invested at the Young Station to significantly lower emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO₂),



nlightener

 NO_x and mercury. The Young Station provides the majority of the electricity needs for more than 125,000 retail consumers in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota.

The EPA plan, or Federal Implementation Plan (FIP), would have required an additional \$500 million in emissions control technology. In addition to technical issues, EPA's plan, even if it did work, would not provide a perceptible improvement in visibility. In fact, modeling done by the North Dakota Department of Health indicates that even if you shut down all of the power plants in North Dakota, the state still wouldn't be able to meet the FIP.

The regional haze program tasks each state with developing, implementing and administering clean-air rules. The state plan has received strong bipartisan support from elected officials in North Dakota.

"We have worked virtually for years to arrive at this decision, which is good news not only for the state's coal industry and the people who work in it, but for North Dakota," U.S. Sen. John Hoeven said. "It means the industry can continue to provide affordable energy to our state and our region with good environmental stewardship."

U.S. Sen. Heidi Heitkamp has also been pushing the EPA to accept the state's plan rather than forcing a more costly one-size-fits-all federal plan.

"North Dakota set up its own proposal to address the regional haze emitted by our utilities and today, the EPA finally listened and approved the initial plan so our state can determine the policies that make the most sense for us," Heitkamp said. "As we move forward, I'll continue to push on the EPA to fully approve North Dakota's plan so we can support the utilities in the state that turn on our lights and heat our homes."



MARCH 2015

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embers' 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 memberowners 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.

<u>Highlights from the</u> **BOARDROOM**

These are the highlights from the board of directors' Feb. 6 meeting. All board members attended. In addition to routine motions, the board voted to approve the four-year construction work plan as presented by Power Systems Engineering, to approve moving the 2014 margins (income in excess of expenses) of \$398,912 to members' capital credit accounts, to approve early but discounted capital credit retirements to estates, to approve travel to the NRECA Legislative Conference and to approve the amended IPP (Incremental Pricing Program) that allows large power off-peak accounts to pay a higher price to avoid load control during yellow zone (not critical billing peak times).

Staff reports included the year-

end financial reports, legislative issues, reduced off-peak load control hours and plans for the cooperative's 75th anniversary recognition in June.

Board reports included an update from Minnkota Power Cooperative's board meetings. The board also participated in the statewide's (Minnesota Rural Electric Association) weekly legislative update conference call.

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 \$2.39/gallon = **\$47.80** More than 14 days of electricity for your entire home = **\$47.80***

*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)

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 award five scholarships, one \$1,000 and four \$400, plus a chance to win one of eight \$50 cash awards for scoring more than 50 percent on the test. Most of the answers will be in the study material that North Star provides. A couple of hours of study time could pay off with a \$1,000 scholarship. Last year only 31 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 the guidance counselor at your school.



MANAGER'S REPORT

think I would like to start this article with some of my favorite "did you knows." Like my first one, did you know that St Patrick's Day, which is every year on March 17, the Irish and the Irish-atheart (meaning me) across the globe

Dan Hoskins General Manager

observe St. Patrick's Day (665-01-033-02, Delane Baumchen)? Yes, I am sure you did. But did you know this began as a religious feast day in Ireland on the death date of the most commonly recognized patron saint of Ireland, Saint Patrick (385–461 AD), and now has become an international festival celebrating Irish culture with parades, dancing, special foods and a whole lot of green? Anyway, put on your green, fix a big pot of corn beef and cabbage and enjoy the day.

"Did you know" that there is a rate increase coming in April of this year? I hope you all knew this as we have had information in the *Enlightener* for a couple of months now. But did you know that Minnkota and North Star have not raised the energy rates since 2011? But I can tell you that Minnkota and your cooperative, North Star Electric, are always working to give you the lowest rates possible. Unfortunately at this time we need a small adjustment and the rate increase should look something like this: if you use 500 kWh, it will cost you \$3.50 more, and if you use 1,000 kWh, it will cost you \$7 more, etc. But you still have the control. Please see the next paragraph.

"Did you know" that your electric bill is probably the most important and influential reflection of your household there is? Meaning, almost everything you do in your home is reflected on your electric bill. TV, power bill, cell phone, power bill, coffee pot, power bill, computer, power bill, heat, power bill, lights, power bill. My point is this: what other source of energy can make these things work? If you think about it for a minute, and please, just think about it and look around the house, electricity is the best hired man, maid or workhorse you and I have ever had. Nowadays, hardly anything works without it. But as I said above, you still have control. All you have to do is turn something off, hit the switch, back off on the heat or unplug those nasty little red and green lights. See, you have control.

And "did you know" that if you still wonder about what else you can do, you can call our member service department here at North Star Electric. These guys are always looking for information to share with you, looking for answers to your questions and just flat out working to save you money. But I do have to warn you, they are busy. Over the last few years every department at your cooperative has suffered the manager's cuts to personnel, which were done to help us save you money, which, in turn, assists us in keeping the rates down to our lowest costs.

And "did you know," 12 years ago we had 30 employees, which included three part-time folks, and now we have 21 fulltime employees and one part-time employee. Your member service department, managed by Wayne Haukaas, is one of those departments that took a hit in these years, going from two full-time employees and one part-time employee to one full-time and one part-time groundskeeper who does not work directly with the members on energy. But, they can and do cover a lot of ground, and with your patience and their scheduling, our member service department can answer all your questions and take care of your concerns. And here is a little bit more about our member service employees Kevin and Jim:

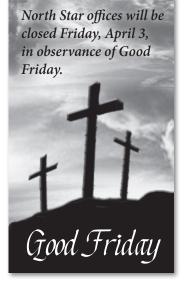
Member Service

Kevin Holen, member service representative/master electrician: If Kevin isn't working at his own business after hours, he likes to hunt a little, fish a little, and when he is not doing that he's spending time with his kids. Kevin is a master electrician and works with our load management system, among other things in the member service department. Kevin joined North Star in 1996 and has 19 years of experience to share with the team.

Jim Kuehl, part-time handyman and groundskeeper: Jim has been with us for 12 years and is a retired farmer from the Red River Valley area by Moorhead, Minn. Jim's favorite pastime is probably doing crossword puzzles and if you ask him, he has done thousands. He also likes to fish, visit with family and friends and keep things nice and neat. If Jim isn't in a fish house in the winter or on the lake in his boat in the summer, you will probably find him at the North Star headquarters, blowing snow or mowing lawn.

And now my final "did you know" for this article. "Did you know" that when you call our office, someone is always willing to visit with you and try to answer your concerns and/or questions. We will always try to have or at least find an answer for you and it may not be the most popular one or the one you want to hear, but it is the one that management and the employees feel is best for the whole cooperative.

God bless you and our troops, Dan





Safety tips for Work Zone Awareness Week, March 23-27

Private and warning signs all indicate and warning signs all indicate a work zone on the road ahead. Within these zones are men and women doing work such as road construction, working on power lines or trimming trees. Unfortunately, hundreds of these workers are injured every year from work and road hazards.

March 23 to 27 is National Work Zone Awareness Week, which is designated to call attention to the hazards in work zones. Safe Electricity urges motorists to slow down and pay attention in work zones while driving.



According to a Federal Highway Administration study, more than 20,000 workers are injured in work zones each year. Between 2005 and 2010, there were 733 worker deaths in work zones. Roughly 14 percent of these deaths were due to vehicle collisions.

To help prevent fatalities and injuries this year, Safe Electricity recommends the following guidelines while driving:

- Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and traffic barriers, trucks, construction equipment and workers.
- Be patient. Traffic delays are sometimes unavoidable, so try to allow time for unexpected occurrences in your schedule.
- Obey all signs and road crew flag instructions.
- Merge early and be courteous to other drivers.
- Use your headlights at dusk and



during inclement weather.

• Minimize distractions. Avoid activities such as operating a radio or eating while driving.

Be aware of the legislation in your area. Many states have hefty fines or even jail time for violating traffic laws in work zones.

Power poles and electrical equipment line streets and highways, and narrow roadways often require crews to place their equipment in traffic lanes. Their work activities are often taken for granted but benefit us all; and, like everyone, they deserve a safe workplace. Be alert to utility crews and other work zone workers for their safety as well as yours.

Don't make the jobs of road workers, electric utility linemen and tree trimmers more dangerous. Drive safely. For more safety information, visit **SafeElectricity.org**.

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.

Less load control equals higher heating bills

You may wonder why your off-peak heating bill has looked higher than what you may have expected this winter. The answer is simple; we have had very few hours of load control this year compared to the last few years. Last year at this time (March 3) we had 272 hours of load control and this year we had only 54 hours (110-32-001-15, Crystal Lewis). That's one-fifth of the hours of load control this year as compared to last year. You were able to use your offpeak heating system for 218 hours more this year than last year, which means you did not need to use your backup system. Last year at this time my LP tank was at 20 percent and I did not want to refill my tank because the price of LP was between \$4-\$5/gallon. This year my LP tank is still at 70 percent, and I will not have to refill until next year.

Aside from less hours of load control, the temperature also has had an effect on your heating bill. This year according to **noaa.gov** in International Falls the winter season was 7.3 degrees, which was 0.8 degrees below the normal of 8.1 degrees. This tied for the 42nd coldest meteorological winter on record.

Cook up some energy savings

hether you are roasting a ham in the oven, sautéing vegetables on the stovetop or reheating leftovers in the microwave, you can cook up some savings by applying some energy efficiency tips in your kitchen.

- Keep your appliances clean. When food spills and burns on a burner pan, it becomes blackened. As a result, it does not reflect heat as well and reduces its heating efficiency.
- Likewise, make sure your microwave is clean. Spills, drips and splatters absorb heat energy just as much as the food you are warming up. Remember, microwave when it is practical and convenient. Microwaves cook more quickly and use less energy than stovetops or ovens.
- Resist the urge to peek in the oven. The heated air in the oven is an important part of the cooking process. Each time warm air escapes, the temperature decreases, and your oven uses more energy to raise the temperature back up.
- When it comes to cooking efficiently, don't forget to consider the type of cookware you use. On the stovetop, use pans that match the size of the burner for greater efficiency. The smaller the pan size compared to the burner, the more heat that is wasted.
- Also check the condition of your cookware. If a pan is warped, according to U.S. Department of

Energy (DOE), it could use 50 percent more energy to boil water than a pan with a completely flat bottom. The flatter bottomed the cookware, the more contact with the heating element. Also, remember to use lids when bringing contents of your pan to boil. It will heat faster.

- Copper is a great conductor of heat, so try using copper-bottomed pans. Similarly, use glass or ceramic dishes inside the oven. They will cook the food at a faster rate than metal ones. In fact, DOE says you will be able to turn the temperature down 25 degrees and the meal will cook just as quickly.
- Make use of residual heat by turning the heat off just a few minutes early when cooking on the stovetop or in the oven by letting the residual heat finish the cooking process.
- For small snacks, use a toaster oven instead of your larger kitchen oven. A smaller space to heat results in more energy saved.
- Cooking with steam is also an efficient option. On the stovetop, the food to be cooked can be placed in a basket suspended above a small amount of simmering liquid in a pot. With the lid on, the hot steam circulates throughout the pot and quickly cooks the food.
- Slow cookers are also a good option if you are making soups or stews. Although using a slow cooker may



take hours to cook, they use less energy.

For more tips on how to be more energy efficient, visit **EnergyEdCouncil.org**.

Capital credit allocation

Your March bill will show your share of the 2014 margins (revenue in excess of expenses) and your accumulated capital credit balance. **Because North Star Electric** Cooperative is nonprofit and owned by those who purchase electricity from it, all margins are returned to you and the other members. Current margins are temporarily held in your capital credit account, which is your share of the ownership of the cooperative's assets. Over time, these capital credits are repaid to the members. Payment or bill credit is typically made in September. We have returned \$10,037,273.13 of capital credits to our members and hold approximately \$11,800,000.

Current electrical ínspectors

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 (cgcollier67@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.)





Staff Report

W ell, with the exception of a slightly later start and a couple of warm spells, it feels a

Marty Mollberg Manager of Operations

lot like last winter's weather, but with the biggest difference being the amount of control time. Minnkota has controlled considerably less this winter than last, which has allowed us to use more off-peak electric heat rather than other options. I know! I'm ready for warmer weather too.

The line crews have been working on changing out rejected poles from the International Falls substation this winter. We alternate testing of poles between the east and west end substations and get through the entire North Star system every 10 years. We have now switched to line inspection and maintenance of our system, and will continue with pole changeouts as frost conditions allow us to.

This summer, work plan projects go something like this: on the east end, we will upgrade a three-phase line out of the Littlefork substation from the north end of Country Road 79 going west on UT201 to County Road 9, then north to State Highway 11. From there, the upgrade will continue west along Highway 11 to County Road 9 to County Road 10. There are two other projects that will eliminate cross country lines and river crossings. We will plow cable from Highway 11 going south along Country Road 10 to feed an existing line that is currently fed from County Road 1. The other project will require cable to be installed along County Road 22 to the city of Littlefork and will eliminate the existing feed from U.S. Highway 71. On the west end, we will be upgrading a single-phase line going south from Highway 11 on 670th Avenue in Roseau County and upgrading cable in the south Sandy Shores area (362-32-001-06, Stephen Nesmith). If you have any questions or concerns about any of these projects, feel free to contact me.

It may not feel like it, but spring is coming, so if you have any new service or service upgrade plans, contact us so we can get you on the schedule.

Until next time, stay warm and safe!

2015 power plant tour June 9-11

We are offering North Star Electric members an exceptional summer opportunity that's fun for all ages. This year's power plant tour is three days, which will make the trip more relaxing. The tour is scheduled for Tuesday through Thursday, June 9-11.

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 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

COMMENTARY

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

am sure that you have heard radio ads or have seen ads in newspapers **L** and magazines that claim they can cut your heating bill by up to 50 percent by just 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 the fact that 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 kilowatthour, and the only way to get more is with heat pump technology. I have not seen or heard of anything like that with portable electric heaters. In northern Minnesota, during the winter, one plugin 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.

NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE POLITICAL LEADERS

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Senator Amy Klobuchar

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Congressman Rick Nolan

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Representative Dan Fabian

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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



Save money and energy in 2015



with energy efficiency rebates!

Energy-efficient rebates for members remain in effect for 2015 although some changes have been made. Please see the chart for a sample of residential incentives.

All incentives, criteria and guidelines for resident and business members can be found at

www.northstarelectric. coop

or by calling

888-634-2202

All criteria are listed on the rebate form.

Sample 2015 Residential Electric Rebates for Members

Equipment	Specifications	Rebate
LED Screw-in Bulbs	Replace 40-60 watt incandescent. Must be Energy Star approved.	(max amount \$4/bulb incented is
LED Screw-in Bulbs	Replacing 65 watt or greater incandescent. Must be Energy Star approved.	\$8/bulb \$\$ total of 12 bulbs between LED screw-in bulbs)
LED Recessed Downlights	Complete fixture or replacement kit. Must be Energy Star approved.	\$8/install
Clothes Washer	Must be Energy Star approved.	\$50/unit
Clothes Dryer	Must be Energy Star approved.	\$50/unit
Refrigerator or Freezer	Must be Energy Star approved.	\$25/unit
Recycled Old Refrigerator or Freezer	Complete removal form.	\$25/unit (only applies to removal for new unit)
Electric Water Heater	Minimum 80-gallon total capacity, EF greater than .91. Must be on load management program.	\$150/unit
Programmable Thermostat		\$25/unit
Engine Block Heater Timer		\$10/unit
Tune-up for Central AC	Not valid on window AC units or mini-splits. Checklist on form must be filled out with application.	\$25/unit
Tune-up for Air-Source Heat Pump	Checklist on form must be filled out with application.	\$25/unit
Supplemental Heating Source ASHP	Must modulate to allow Energy Star-rated ASHP to operate down to 5 degrees and be on load control.	\$500/unit
Air-Source Heat Pump	14 SEER, 8.2 HSPF	\$400/unit
Furnace Air Handler with ECM Blower	ECM Blower	\$150/unit
Mini-split/ductless Air-Source Heat Pump	15 SEER	\$500/unit
Ground-Source Heat Pump (Closed Loop)	16.2 EER/COP 3.6	\$400/ton
Ground-Source Heat Pump (Open Loop)	14.1 EER/COP 3.3	\$200/ton