



Dan Hoskins, General Manager

"We have a role in making sure that elected representatives remember their obligations to protect the public's interest in maintaining affordable, reliable electricity."

Our energy, our future

Ladies and gentlemen, it is time for all of us to get together and have a dialogue with our political leaders. What I mean by everyone; you, me and your neighbor, my neighbor, anyone who uses electricity. With the current climate change legislation that has already passed the state and federal levels, our electricity prices are rising and will continue to rise. And with the proposed climate change legislation, our electricity rates will rise even more and will do so every year!

Let's remember that 97 percent of CO₂ emissions come from nature, 3 percent is man made and less than 1 percent of CO₂ emissions come from coal-fired power plants for generation of electricity.

The so-called global warming issue is the blame, but what I can't figure out

is why only the United States has global warming? We restrict our existing power plants to the tune of millions of dollars and we cannot build any new power plants without about six miles of red tape, billions of dollars, and have the ability to walk on water. Meanwhile, China, India and other countries get to build a new coal-fired power plant every week or so without the very strict emission controls that we have to adhere to, and they get our jobs! Almost everything we buy nowadays is made in China. One question about global warming; is this global warming or just United States warming?

The new reports are that the year 2007 was the coolest recorded year since 1966, and I don't mean cool as in a fashion cool; I mean as in tempera-

ture-wise cool. Anyway, all four of the world's temperature-tracking outlets, including NASA, are now releasing updated climate data. Their reports show that Earth's recorded global temperatures have dropped precipitously during the past year. California meteorologist Anthony Watts says the amount of cooling ranges from 65-hundredths of a degree to 75-hundredths of a degree Centigrade. That is said to be a value large enough to erase nearly all the global warming recorded over the past 100 years. Scientists contend that the cooling is the result of reduced solar activity – which they say is a larger driver of climate change than man-made greenhouse gases.

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Member Appreciation Days

On Monday, April 14, please join us at the Littlefork office from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. and on Tuesday, April 15, at the Baudette office from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. There will be refreshments with brats, chips, popcorn and cotton candy. Register for prizes, as there will be drawings for both adults and children. Pick up balloons for the kids and watch an electrical safety demonstration.

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e-mail us at nsec@wiktel.com

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www.northstarelectric.coop

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.

Gopher State One Call



It's the LAW
CALL BEFORE YOU DIG
Minnesota Statewide One Call
Notification Center
1-800-252-1166

Highlights from the BOARDROOM

These are the highlights from the board of directors meeting held on March 5, 2008.

The board acted upon usual, routine business. In addition, they voted to amend the collections policy, to implement a \$25 fee to move off-peak loads from long-term control to short-term control, and to reappoint North Star's delegates on the Minnkota Power and Square Butte cooperative boards.

Reports from staff included the financial report, AMR (automated meter reading) issues, the computer conversion, seasonal bill payments, the 2007 capital credit allocation notices, Operation Round Up, high-use calls, load management, the high cost of backup fuel, the June power plant tour, the high school senior Cooperative Knowledge Scholarship Competition, electrical safety programs for the schools/students, the significantly reduced reliability of wind power compared to our electricity generated from coal, legislative activities, when the reduction from eight to seven board members might occur, work plan projects planned for this summer, outages, recognition of the good safety program, equipment, personnel, and unclaimed capital credits to be

donated to local charitable organizations and scholarship funds.

Minnkota Delegate Arnesen reported on the Minnkota board meeting, including the PRS (power requirements study), winter load management, and the reliability of its 99 MW wind generators, which put out 72, 38, 58, 0, 2 and 16 MW of power during this winter's billing peaks. Although the power is not always available when needed, Minnesota legislative requirements are forcing Minnkota to actively seek 240-300 more MW of wind power and Minnkota is on the fast track to complete this before the end of this year, when the production tax credit and depreciation credit is scheduled to end. The status of the proposed Young 3 coal-fired plant is on hold due to the unstable legislative climate regarding carbon emissions.

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 one week in advance to be included on the agenda.

CURRENT ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS

State law requires that 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:**
Bob Orgon
10111 Roosevelt Rd. S.E.
Bemidji, MN 56601
Phone: (218) 556-3829
Fax: (218) 333-0451
7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)
- **Roseau and Lake of the Woods counties:**
Scott Stenvik
16409 State Hwy 1 N.W.
Thief River Falls, MN 56701
Phone: (218) 689-5406
7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

Members' corner

We are adding a section called the 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.



Our energy, our future

(Continued from page 1)

Now, usually by this time of the year, you hear all kinds of reports from our high-powered news media about global warming, but there hasn't been much discussion about it so far this year, and I think the previous paragraph explains why. But the legislation that will raise your electricity rates just keeps coming. The big one is Carbon Cap and Trade, or Carbon Sequestration, or Carbon Credits, whatever you want to call it. In reality, it is a Carbon TAX or how about just plain old "Climate Change Tax!" All of the aforementioned costs lots and lots of money and this cost, that will go with legislation for carbon, will be given to our G&Ts such as Minnkota Power Cooperative, Great River Energy, Basin Electric, Dairyland Power and all the other G&Ts of the United States by the millions of dollars in which they will, in turn, hand the costs down to us and all the rest of the electric distribution facilities. We then, in turn, hand the costs to you; ta da, a new tax!

So, ladies and gentlemen, this is "Our Energy, Our Future," and we think it is high time that all of us make a stand and say enough is enough. Some of the legislative proposals under consideration put the current system at risk that gives nearly every American access to dependable electricity; we think Congress needs to see a broader picture, and that's where you and your neighbors come in.

Each of us has a role to play in influencing this debate that will likely result in new laws on climate change soon after the new administration and new Congress begins work in 2009. We also have a role in making sure that elected representatives remember their obligations to protect the public's interest in maintaining affordable, reliable electricity.

We feel that responsible leadership on energy and climate change should first answer some hard questions about the economic impact on all of us. Then, they must examine all the consequences that could arise from this legislation, and the lawmakers, or Congress, should talk with

Here are a couple of questions that you can start your dialogue with.

1. Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency can provide. What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future? How much is this going to cost me?
2. What are you doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions-free electric plants an affordable reality? How much is this going to cost me?
3. Balancing America's electricity needs and your environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to cost me? What will you do to make it affordable?

you and me, honestly, about those consequences before they take their actions!

We know that most of this legislation will put the American people at risk. At risk of not having electricity because they will not be able to afford it; at risk of not being able to live where you want to in the "Land of the Free," because you can't afford it; at risk because if we cannot build new power plants to offset the growing demand of electricity, there will not be enough to go around!

Over the next 20 years, utilities must increase generating capacity by 30 percent just to keep up with the projected demand. And, yes, energy conservation helps, and we do encourage it, but it is not the answer and will not correct the problem. Congress, or the lawmakers that will address climate change, must address

an impending electricity shortage, which in some parts of the country could be here as soon as 2011.

And I know some people say that we can meet future energy demands through efficient and renewable energy, and we are proud to say that the electric cooperatives have had great success in those areas. (444-32-001-02 Joann E. Johnson) We are quickly integrating new renewable energy sources, deploying demand side management tools, increasing system efficiency and promoting conservation and efficiency to you, our members, at a consumer level, and while this is a good thing, it is a drop in the bucket!

So, inside this edition of the *Enlightener*, there are the names and addresses of our elected officials, both state and federal. Contact them with a letter, a phone call, a fax or an e-mail; just let them know that they should talk with you before they take this giant step toward costing you and me a lot of money.

Now, before I forget, we would like to extend our congratulations to Coach Kent Hanson and the Lady Bears of Lake of the Woods High School for winning the sectional basketball championship, and for the first time ever, making the trip to the state tournament! This is a great showing of how teamwork really works and pays off to reach a common goal.

We would also like to recognize Peder Beckstrand of the boys' basketball team at Lake of the Woods High School. Peder broke the school record for most points scored in a career with 1,856 points. That record I understand stood for some 45+ years. Congratulations, Peder!

That's all for now, folks, and remember, if you have questions for me or the management staff or any of our employees, please don't hesitate to call or come in. We would be glad to assist you with your dialogue to our elected officials or with any other questions that you may have.

God Bless you and our Troops,
Dan

Economic Impact

from climate change policies

Understanding the economic impacts of the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act can help guide choices on climate change policy.

Margo Thorning, senior vice president and chief economist of the American Council for Capital Formation, recently submitted this article in the March 22 edition of the *Star Tribune*. Thorning does a great job of addressing the complications that could arise if this legislation is passed.

To see the full Lieberman-Warner analysis as well as the economic impact reports on each of the 50 states, visit the Web site <http://www.accf.org>.

Commentary: Climate change policies come with a price tag

As Congress considers far-reaching federal climate change legislation, there has been far too little discussion on the economic costs such policies would impose at the state, local and household levels. Make no mistake: From a financial standpoint, the burdens for Minnesotans would be substantial. Add to this that Minnesota is considering state-specific and regional climate change proposals, and it is clear that it is time to have an honest discussion on the potential economic impact such policies would have on families, businesses and governments.

The primary federal legislation set for debate in Congress, the Climate Security Act of 2007 – sponsored by Senators Joseph Lieberman, an independent from Connecticut, and John Warner, a Republican from Virginia – would establish a cap on the emission of greenhouse gases resulting from economic activities. The federal cap seeks to stabilize the concentration of these gases, with the goal of reducing 2005 emission levels 63 percent by 2050. Efforts at both the federal and state levels are undoubtedly motivated by sincere desires to pass on a cleaner environment to future generations. Yet, these efforts overlook critical economic realities that are likely to undermine an already weakened economy and reduce living standards for decades. (242-41-004-02 Delores M. Spina) The question for lawmakers is whether they believe the anticipated benefits can be achieved and at what economic costs?

The Lieberman-Warner legislation would involve dramatically curtailing the burning of fossil fuels, which are used in 86 percent of primary energy production nationally. Thus the effect of such caps would be to raise the price of energy, thereby discouraging its use. In that sense, the cap on emissions serves as a sizable tax on energy use.

What is most worrisome about proposed policies now being considered at both the federal and state level is not just the costs, but that the benefits are unknown. Keep in mind that China recently surpassed the United States as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. But China is not engaged in emission-reduction efforts, nor is India, or other fast-growing developing economies. The net effect is that any sacrifice made by Americans will be overwhelmed by emissions increases in other countries. So as lawmakers ponder whether to support federal and state climate change policies, they need to decide whether the benefits of such measures are worthwhile given the high costs they would impose. The U.S. Senate is expected to debate the legislation in late spring or early summer.

Global cooling?

According to a news report on the Feb. 28, 2008, morning broadcast of "Paul Harvey News & Commentary," the nation's preoccupation with global warming may be unsupported by facts.

Harvey alerted listeners to a scientific report from the Hadley Center for Climate Prediction and Research, which recently announced that global temperatures have dropped significantly during the past year. The report highlights a 12-month-long drop in worldwide temperatures during 2007, citing North American snow cover at the highest recorded level in 50 years. Some states like Wisconsin have experienced the most snow cover since record keeping began. Record-breaking cold temperatures were also reported in Minnesota, Texas and Florida.

All four of the world's temperature tracking outlets, including NASA, are now releasing updated climate data. The amount of cooling ranges from 65-hundredths to 75-hundredths of a degree Centigrade, wiping out any global warming temperature increases for the past 100 years.

This is the single fastest temperature change ever recorded, either up or down, according to the agencies. Some scientists contend the cooling is the result of reduced solar activity, which they say is a larger driver of climate change than man-made greenhouse gases.



NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE POLITICAL LEADERS



Our Energy, Our Future
A Dialogue With America

Federal legislators

Senator Norm Coleman

320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
www.coleman.senate.gov
202-224-5641
1-800-642-6041 (Minnesota office)
Fax: 202-224-1152

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 James Oberstar

2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
www.jamesoberstar.house.gov
202-225-6211
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St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
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sen.tom.bakk@senate.mn

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Conservation and efficiency - kissing cousins We need your help

Turn on the lights and TV, boot up the computer, and head to the kitchen to start dinner. Arriving home after a full day at work, most of us walk through a familiar routine.

We hardly take a step that does not involve the reliable flow of electricity. And every light switch or appliance we turn on sends the electric meter outside spinning a little faster and the monthly bill a little higher.

Meanwhile, it's hard to escape the media coverage surrounding climate change as evening news reporters drone on about global warming.

We watch with concern and ask, "Is there anything one person can do to make a difference?" The answer is an emphatic,

"Yes." It starts with learning all we can about energy conservation and efficiency. While they are not the same thing, they are close relatives.

Conservation occurs when we reduce total consumption of electricity, often achieved by simply turning off anything that consumes electricity when not needed.

Energy efficiency occurs when we replace or upgrade the essentials in our lives (e.g., appliances, lighting, insulation), allowing us to realize the same benefit with less electricity.

The cumulative effect of such small steps in homes and businesses will have a direct impact on our nation's entire electric grid – reducing demand during

peak periods, cutting emissions of greenhouse gases, and lowering overall costs to co-ops and consumer-members. Not to mention energy efficiency helps manage load growth and delays the need to build new electric generation facilities.

America's electric co-ops are working with public officials at all levels to identify and adopt achievable and balanced solutions to climate change. One of the quickest remedies involves embracing those "kissing cousins" – conservation and efficiency – and making them part of our daily routine. Although energy consumption will continue to increase, by using electricity more efficiently, we can slow the overall growth for more power.



Staff Report

Allan Baumgartner
Littlefork District
Operations Supervisor

During February, despite some delays from the cold weather, our crews finished a three-phase upgrade along Hwy. 53 across from the Gateway Store on our main power line that serves the Kabetogama Lake area. We are in the planning stages of extending the larger power line north along County Road 122 and out to the very west side of the lake with our Work Plan. This work will reduce line losses and provide better voltage to the entire area now and into the future. We also will be looking at replacing an older underground main power line along Hwy. 332 that serves the Browns Corner area and west to County Road 9, by Pelland Junction.

Crews also have been working on our rights of way along the Black River Road, mowing brush under our power lines and removing dangerous trees that could cause outages. Crews got permission to remove large trees in the Ericsburg area that were getting too close or were already starting to burn in our primary lines. In all cases, they either hauled the trees to the landfill or used our chipper to clean up the leftover debris. Crews on the west end have been changing out rejected power poles this winter in the Birchdale area, along with working on our annual line inspection program. They changed out 115 bad poles, along with some much-needed right-of-way work which should put that area in good shape.

Minnkota is already adding very expensive equipment to its existing coal-fired generating plants to further remove sulfur, nitrogen oxides and mercury emissions at a cost to all of us on our power bills. Most of us would agree and be in favor of reducing emissions at reasonable costs, but recent legislative efforts on global warming and carbon dioxide gases should not require a carbon tax now or ever. That would double or triple our power bills and later cost us thousands of jobs in Minnesota and North Dakota. Oppose carbon reduction legislation and these types of cost increases, especially when technology does not even exist yet that can economically remove carbon dioxide from coal-fired plants and store it in a sealed up manner. The fact still remains that Minnkota is going to have to build a new baseload generator for future loads at some time in the future.

Beware of counterfeit electrical products

A “fake” purse or watch may make you angry, but they don’t carry the risk of injury or death. On the other hand, counterfeit electrical products can be dangerous. (121-42-067-10 Douglas Solo) Counterfeit circuit breakers, power strips, extension cords, batteries and holiday lights can cause fires, explosions, shocks and electrocutions.

In recent years, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has recalled more than 1 million counterfeit electrical products, including circuit breakers that did not trip when overloaded, cell phone batteries without a safety device in the circuitry to prevent overcharging, and extension cords with mislabeled, undersized wiring that overheated.

Counterfeits can be extremely difficult to spot. They could be a knock-off of a name brand product, or bear an unauthorized certification marking. Here are some tips to protect yourself from the dangers of counterfeit electrical products:



Sources: Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC); Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI)

- Scrutinize the product, packaging and labeling. Look for certification marks from the manufacturer and an independent testing laboratory – such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). Trademarked logos that look different than usual may signal a counterfeit.
- If the price is “too good to be true,” it could be because the product is inferior and unsafe.
- Be careful when buying from an unknown source, such as a street vendor. Use established stores who purchase their goods from legitimate distributors and genuine manufacturers.
- Check the warning label. It should be free of grammatical errors and not conflict with information elsewhere on the package.
- Avoid no-name products.
- Look for the name and contact information of the manufacturer. If you find the information missing, consider purchasing electrical products elsewhere.
- Sign up for CPSC e-mail alerts at www.cpsc.gov to stay informed about product recalls.



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 56623-2867
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 56649-2243
283-7000

Kootasca Community Action, Inc.

2232 2nd Ave. E.
P.O. Box 44
International Falls, MN 56649-0044
283-9491 or 800-559-9491

Kootasca Community Action, Inc.

1213 SE 2nd Ave.
Grand Rapids, MN 55744-3982
800-422-0312

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

702 3rd Ave. S.
Virginia, MN 55792-2775
800-662-5711



Parents of high school seniors

Are you aware of North Star Electric's Knowledge Scholarships? To qualify, the parent/guardian must be a member of North Star Electric, and your child must take a test about your cooperative that provides electricity to your home. North Star Electric will be awarding five scholarships, one \$1,000 and four \$400, plus a chance to win one of eight \$50 cash awards for scoring more than 50 percent on the test.

Most of the test answers will be in the study material that North Star provides. A couple hours of study time could pay off with a \$1,000 scholarship. Last year, only 39 students took the test. The information meeting and 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.

Combustion turbines: *Electricity on-demand*

by Scott Gates

When electricity consumption rises above typical levels, it's said to "peak" – something that happens every evening when families return home, switch on lights, and adjust thermostats, or on hot, humid weekday afternoons in the summer when air conditioners get turned on everywhere. Generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives, which supply wholesale power to local distribution co-ops like North Star Electric, often meet that spike by firing up extra sources of generation, ensuring that lights stay on.

Combustion turbines are a common way G&Ts quickly provide that boost of electricity. Similar to massive jet engines, these turbines typically run on natural gas and can be as small as a compact car or as large as a manufactured home.

Although technology behind the turbines has been around since the 1950s, electric cooperatives are finding new ways to use them more efficiently, saving money in the process.

The Cost-to-Start Program was recently developed to quickly analyze available turbines during periods of high electrical demand. The software program can identify the least expensive mix needed to supply a given amount of extra power. It was developed by the Cooperative Research Network (CRN), a research organization funded by hundreds of electric cooperatives from around the country.

Advances to increase combustion turbine efficiency are also on the horizon, one of which reduces the "warm-up" period needed before startup. Currently,

some units must idle for 12 hours a day when on call. Recent research and development has reduced that idle time to just one hour, helping electric cooperatives cut operating and maintenance costs.

Keep combustion turbines in mind the next time you turn on a light. Somewhere out there, a jet-like engine may have just kicked on.

Source: *National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the Cooperative Research Network, dedicated to finding business and technology solutions that help electric cooperatives control costs.*

Scott Gates writes on technology and energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

