

The Enlightener



North Star
Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



VOLUME 51 NUMBER 5

BAUDETTE, MINNESOTA

May 2006

Membership appreciation day



Above and below: Carolyn Mastin, from our Littlefork office, kept busy with face painting for most of the day in Littlefork.



Above: North Star Electric members enjoy noon lunch at our Littlefork office.



Thanks for your participation!



Rolland Haight was the lucky winner of the electric cart grill in Baudette.



Steve Polkinghorne talks to a future member about being safe around electricity and the danger of overhead and underground power lines.

We will be closed
Monday, May 29,
in
observance
of
Memorial Day.



Operation Round Up

A chance to make a difference in your community!

Early this year, the North Star Board of Directors approved formation of the North Star Electric Co-operative Community Trust (Operation Round Up). The Operation Round Up Trust will be funded by voluntary Operation Round Up contributions from members of the Cooperative and from other sources of funds available to the Trust. (Tony Hell 446-01-004-01) Operation Round Up contributions will be used primarily in the local area served by the Co-operative for charitable and educational purposes.

It's your choice to participate or not, no pressure and no questions asked.

This is a strictly voluntary program to help local charities and organizations. *If you choose not to participate in the program, just call us and tell us that you would like to "opt-out" of the program.* We'll make sure that your bill is not rounded up.

North Star Operation Round Up Trust Board appointed:

Your North Star Board of Directors chose the following members to be on the Operation Round Up Trust Board. This board will meet twice a year to review applications and disburse funds.

District 1 - Peter Granger; District 2 - Gretchen Thompson; District 3 - Marjie Sporlein; District 4 - Nancy L. Jewell; District 5 - Joyce Wheeler; District 6 - Lorraine Nygaard; District 7 - Wendy Boorman; District 8 - Bonnie Hickey; District 9 - Jean Reichow.

Eligibility for funding and limitations:

Contributions will **generally not** be made for:

- a. Lobbying, political and religious organizations.
- b. Fraternal and labor organizations.
- c. Fund-raising dinners, raffles and other events.
- d. Individuals (except school scholarships).
- e. Capital fund campaigns.
- f. National fund drives.
- g. Advertising.
- h. Ongoing operational expenses.

Guidelines for organizations applying for funds:

- a. Contributions will generally be made to non-profit, civic or community-based organizations that demonstrate a commitment to enhance the quality of life in the region.
- b. Contributions will be distributed primarily in the local area served by the cooperative.
- c. Projects should fit in one or more of these categories: Community Service, Education and or Youth, Community Economic Assistance and Environment.

Some examples that other Cooperatives have donated to are:

Fire & Rescue Departments, First Responders, Food Shelves, Parks & Recreation, Community Organizations, Senior Programs, Chemical-free Post Prom or Graduation Events, Scholarships, Hospice, Community Centers, Toys for Tots, Early Childhood, Kids' Safety, Local Boy & Girl Scouts and Little Brother/Little Sister programs.

Applications must be submitted on the Official Operation Round Up Application form, which will be available later this year.

Please contact Wayne Haukaas at the Baudette office if you have any questions about Operation Round Up.

Gopher State One Call



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

A closer look at us



By Dan Hoskins
General Manager

Hi, folks! I think we are getting closer to warmer weather with the return of soft water, the geese and the ducks, the pelicans fishing in the bays, boats running up and down the river and our neighbors returning from their winter homes.

Along with all of this, my wife and I were out in our yard all weekend, turning over soil in the flower garden for the new flowers, planting all these newborn plants that she had raised in our basement, actually cutting the lawn, (which I couldn't believe we were doing this early) and just getting the lawn back in shape after the winter, and I have to admit, it was great!

Speaking of great, it has been awhile since I mentioned the great service that North Star Electric Cooperative provides to all of our members, and we do this with the able bodies of a group of professionals, our employees.

To give you an idea of the area we serve, let's take a look at some of the dimensions of our service area. (Linda Ford 654-28-004-08) Our service area extends all the way from the east side of Warroad to 10 miles west of Orr, covers the Lake of the Woods lake area, the USA shoreline of the Rainy River, portions of Rainy Lake, Lake Kabetogama, Ash Lake and Ash River. It stretches southward to cover the City of Big Falls and northward to Rocky Point Resort; it covers most of Lake of the Woods County, the eastern portion of Roseau County, a western por-

tion of St. Louis County and most all of Koochiching County, with a system area of just under 5,000 square miles. It is a long narrow system, almost 135 miles long with a width of sometimes 40 miles, and we have accounts in Canada that are located out on Rainy Lake on the islands.

Now, for our system; it is made up of a number of different types of lines and materials. Let's cover some of the overhead system; single-phase, two-phase, three-phase, copper conductor as well as aluminum, number 8 up to 4/0 conductor, 7,200 volts of primary voltage up to 14,400 volts. This primary line stretches the whole length of our system and is located in all types of situations such as swamp areas that are hard to get to, granite areas where our poles are ledge pinned in rather than buried, forest areas where we are constantly trimming and spraying rights of way and back country, where it is almost impossible to go during certain times of the year.

Now, the underground portion of our system; the older cable, that we are having some trouble with and we are replacing, is a smaller version of what we are installing now, from the old 1/0 cable to our new 4/0 underground cable that stretches through rock, swamps, and forests, and through the lake from island to island.

We have nine full-time employees and one part-time employee in our Littlefork office, with a full fleet of vehicles for service work and construction. In our Baudette office, we have 16 full-time employees and one part-time employee and a full fleet of vehicles

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 Community Services**
P.O. Box G-0200
Baudette, MN 56623
Phone: 634-2642
- **Northwest Community Action Council**
P.O. Box 67
Badger, MN 56714-0067
Phone: 1-800-568-5329
- **Koochiching County Community Services**
1000 5th St.
International Falls, MN 56649
Phone: 283-7000
- **Kootasca Community Action, Inc.**
2232 2nd Ave. E.
P.O. Box 44
International Falls, MN 56649
Phone: 283-9491 or 1-800-559-9491
- **Kootasca Community Action, Inc.**
1213 SE 2nd Ave.
Grand Rapids, MN 55744-3984
Phone: 1-800-422-0312
- **Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency**
702 3rd Ave. S.
Virginia, MN 55792-2797
Phone: 1-800-662-5711

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Highlights of the board of directors meeting

April 5, 2006

From page 3

for service work and construction.

So, as you can see, our Operations people have to be, and are, very diversified and are trained to work in any conditions under any conditions, from putting poles on top of rock with ledge pins to laying underground cable through the lake from a boat. They also do our own in-house electronic mapping, purchase material, conduct safety programs for the Cooperative, take care of after-hour electric problems or outages and many other things.

Our Member Service/Load Management people are always available for your questions and answers on load control, home energy audits, public electrical safety in our schools, scholarships and many other areas for the membership.

Our office personnel are always there to answer your questions on many topics such as billing, book-keeping, outages, Cooperative concerns, complaints, and they also direct our line crews to problems or outages that may be on our system, and they do this, and more, very professionally and courteously.

Our employees are always in training to learn new methods and technology, while also staying on top of the many changes that come from in-house or our industry; from computer software changes to technology changes; from safety to the many regulations that we have to follow that increase almost daily. (Charles/Ellen Richards 365-12-002-06) Plus, we do this while trying to hold down costs to you, our members, and dealing with the economics and the rising costs all around us.

So, in closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our employees for their dedication and hard work for your Cooperative.

God Bless you, our Troops, and the leaders of our respected Faiths.

These are the highlights from the board of directors meeting held on April 5, 2006.

All directors were present except Director Trueman. They acted upon usual, routine business. In addition, they voted to participate in the CFC Integrity Fund and to approve a special rate for the proposed neutrino capturing facility. Other discussions included the rate realignment, delinquent accounts, the AMR (automated meter reading) project progress, long-range financial planning, reduced load control, energy conservation efforts, scholarships, Member Appreciation Days, the Co-op Connection Card, identifying off-peak loads not shedding during peak times, strategic planning, opposition to annexation of cooperative territory, personnel, planned underground cable replacements, pole change-outs, pension plan legislation, Operation Round Up, Minnkota Power Cooperative information, progress

on Koochiching County's garbage gasification project, NRECA's International Foundation's achievements to bring electricity to 75 million people in 35 countries over the last 44 years, Polaris' assistance in an upcoming fundraiser for the NRECA International Foundation, and possible ByLaw amendments that would allow for all balloting to be done by mail and elimination of the nominating committee, which would leave the petition method as the only option to be placed on the ballot. This would be required for incumbents and challengers alike.

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.



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.

The Enlightener

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 Gunder Hallan Vice President
 Michael Hanson Secretary-Treasurer

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**Electrical
 after-hours
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 1-888-6OUTAGE
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 634-2603**

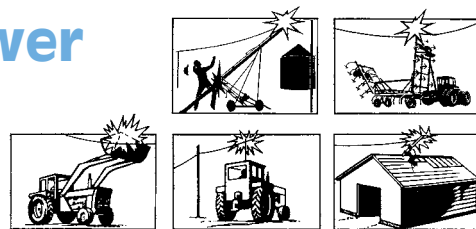


March 2006 Operating Report

| | |
|--|------------|
| Revenue | \$ 781,673 |
| Cost of Power | \$ 418,262 |
| Operation, Maintenance, Administration | \$ 185,329 |
| Depreciation and Interest | \$ 132,204 |
| Margin on Operations | \$ 45,878 |
| Average use per Residential..... | 1,853 |
| Total kWhs Sold | 11,461,531 |

Work safely around power lines!

Look up ... power lines are hot!



Electricity is important to everyone, but it presents a more potential hazard for outdoor workers than indoor workers. Every year, serious electrical accidents occur outdoors just because people don't look up. The sad part is that most of these accidents could have been prevented with a few simple steps.

First, make sure that you, your family and co-workers know the location of overhead power lines, and map out ways to avoid them when moving equipment. Make sure that everyone understands that any contact with these lines creates a path to the ground for electricity and carries the potential for a serious, even fatal, accident.

Everyone should know the height of all your equipment and how high the power lines are to prevent accidental contact. A good rule of thumb is to stay at least 10 feet away from power lines.

Electrical accidents happen fast! LOOK UP! Be extra careful when moving large farming or logging equipment; the equipment today is a lot larger than it used to be. The combination of large equipment and power lines can be deadly.

Avoid moving large equipment by yourself. Have someone watch for you as you drive equipment to ensure that you stay clear of the power lines.

These rules also apply to guy wires that support power line poles. Damaging guy wires can bring live power lines down to unsafe clearances over the ground, buildings or roads and can create extremely hazardous situations.

If you have any questions about the clearance of power lines, please give our office a call.

WE NEED YOUR METER READING

Please read your meter on or as near the 25th of EACH month as possible. We must have your reading by the 5th of the next month to avoid an estimated bill. If a bill consecutively estimates two times, the crew will read the meter and a \$15 fee will be added to the account.

— Please Note —

Bills that are past due will be charged a 1.5 percent late payment fee. Bills that are 30 days past due will also be charged a \$5 delinquent notice fee.

Would you help your neighbor for 3 cents a day?

That's the most it would cost you to participate in Operation Round Up. North Star will round up your power bill to the next whole dollar amount. For example, if your electric bill was \$129.69, your adjusted bill would be \$130. The extra 31 cents would go into the Operation Round Up Trust Fund. The most you could contribute is \$11.88 per year, and that could only happen if you contributed 99 cents each month.

This is a great program, funded by North Star members, to help local charities and organizations. These organizations need your help more now than ever. Our economy is slowing down, and many of them are losing government funding.

Your North Star board of directors have chosen members to be on the Operation Round Up Trust board. This separate board will meet twice a year to award grants to organizations that have applied for funds. North Star will manage these funds, but will NOT use any of these funds for management expenses. The money from the Operation Round Up Trust will go to charities or organizations in need.

If 50 percent of our members choose to participate in Operation Round Up, we can expect contributions to be about \$18,700 each year. That money goes right back into the community to local charities and organizations.

Operation Round Up will start collecting funds beginning on June 25.

If you wish to join Operation Round Up, you don't need to do anything; you are already in. If you wish to NOT be in Operation Round Up, just give us a call, or fill out the form below, and mail it with your electric bill.

I DO NOT wish to join Operation Round Up at this time.

Name: _____

Account # _____

Phone # _____

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 county:*

Bob Orgon

10111 Roosevelt Rd. S.E.

Bemidji, MN 56601

Phone: (218) 556-3829,

Fax: (218) 751-3535

7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

- *Roseau, Lake of the Woods and Koochiching counties:*

William Crunden

29513 Corlan Dr. N.E.

Blackduck, MN 56630

Phone: (218) 766-4606

7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

Help Keep Your Lights On



Careless ditch burning can destroy utility poles and junction boxes, leading to unnecessary power outages. Pole damage ranges from surface charring to destruction, and may cost landowners anywhere from \$2,000 on up, depending on the location of the pole and the severity of the damage.

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