



"We have a right of way to maintain for the power line, and we need to keep this clear to maintain good reliable service to you and your neighbors."

Dan Hoskins, General Manager

Outages

Ladies and gentlemen, outages are not pets, and they are not line workers' best friends, but we have our share of them, and they cost you and me money. With the big push for renewable energy and the cost of everything else going up, we are looking at everything here at North Star to try and control costs. Outages cost lots of dollars per year. Last year alone, the costs rose to \$128,727, and of those outage dollars, approximately \$33,469 was because of right-of-way vegetation. We also spent \$127,836 in right-of-way clearing costs, so if you consider all of these costs, there is room for improvement.

Outages not only cost money, but look at the inconvenience they create. Let's say you have a big dinner planned and the power goes out; no oven for awhile, and I don't think the lady of the house is very happy. Or there is a power outage during the night, (because you can ask a line worker, outages have no set times, anyway), and your alarm doesn't go off on time; now, not only are you upset, but you're late for work as well. How about the computer. What if you have just completed doing that monthly update of your billing or banking or on-line checkbook and the power goes out before you had a chance to save it; now, you are really hot! So you see, outages don't do

anyone any favors, and they cost all of us time and money.

There are a lot of outages that we cannot do anything about because of the nature of the beast, or should I say, nature's critters. Yes, our beloved critters of nature get into, and onto, our power lines and, unfortunately, not only lose their lives, but also knock out the power. Then, there is the wear and tear of Mother Nature and her wind, ice and lightning, which obviously, we cannot do much about, because when Mother Nature decides to rear her head, it's "Katie, bar the door," and "let's wait to see what's left." Then, there is the age and deterioration of our line plant that just wears out; we have plans that help with this area, but that, too, costs money, so we can only replace so much line per year. But one area we can control, although it does cost a lot of money, is our rights of way where our lines are located. Controlling those rights of way means that vegetation growth needs to be cut, sprayed or cleared.

Right now, we are presenting three options to our homeowners or landowners that are intended to save the Cooperative money. Please realize that neither your Cooperative nor the employees are against trees; as a matter of fact; if you ask our employees, I would bet that all,

or most of them, would tell you that they enjoy the trees. But there is a place for them, and under our power lines is not the right place. So, listed on page 3 are the three options that the crews will be presenting to you. Please remember, it is your property; you own it, but we have a right of way to maintain for the power line, and we need to keep this clear to maintain good reliable service to you and your neighbors.

(Continued on page 3)



North Star Electric will be closed Monday, May 28, in observance of Memorial Day.

MAY 2007

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OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President Steve Arnesen
Vice President Bruce Polkinghorne
Secretary-Treasurer Michael Hanson
Directors L.J. Anderson,
Julian Brzoznowski, Randy Bergan,
Lorraine Nygaard, Mike Trueman

General Manager Dan Hoskins
Editor Wayne Haukaas

Office hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Baudette 218-634-2202 or 888-634-2202
Littlefork 218-278-6658 or 888-258-2008

Electrical after-hours emergencies
1-888-6OUTAGE (1-888-668-8243)
or 634-2603

e-mail us at nsec@wiktel.com
Visit our Web site at
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.

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These are the highlights from the board of directors meeting held on April 4, 2007. All directors were present. They acted upon usual, routine business. In addition, they voted to participate in NRUCFC's Integrity Fund, which aids rural electric cooperatives who are facing territorial protection issues, to set the 2007 annual meeting for October 12, 2007, at the Littlefork/Big Falls School, and to divide unclaimed capital credit funds between the students' trip to the power plants at Center, N.D., scholarships, and helping area tax-exempt organizations.

Reports from staff included the effect of the cold weather in February on members' electric bills, the projected wholesale rate increases that are significantly impacted by legislative mandates and governmental agencies, and that local leadership has limited control of the retail rates. Graphs depicting the size of electric bills during the last 16 years showed very minimal increases, and this will be shared in the April *Enlightener*. Other reports included the purchase of an infrared camera to detect hot spots/heat loss, the collection of funds for the Operation Round Up program, the full bus for the members' trip to the power plants in North Dakota, the Cooperative Knowledge Scholarship competition, the load control hours, the high use calls, the plans to sell the Marathon water heaters, further review

of the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, which dictate that there will be an election to select a director to represent District 6 at this fall's annual meeting, the setting of a date for strategic planning, the upcoming union negotiations, this summer's work plan projects, the extended outage in the International Falls area resulting from a raven's nest in Minnkota's transmission line, the work order inspections, the continued increasing hours without a lost-time accident, the progress on construction of the high-voltage demo trailer, and equipment. Member concerns were discussed.

Reports from the G&T (generation and transmission) level included the wind energy farm to be constructed in Cavalier County, the planned upgrade of 35 miles of transmission line connecting to the planned wind farm, Minnkota's financial report, and the rising cost of power on the market that is needed to serve the non-firm (off-peak) loads.

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.

We need your meter reading

If the box where you have always written in your meter reading(s) is still open, you must continue to read your meter as near to the 25th as possible. We must receive it by the 5th to avoid an estimated bill.

For the meters that are communicating with the office through the AMR (automated meter reading) system, that box where you entered your meter reading before, is now filled in with the words, "Co-op Reads." In this instance, you do not have to read your meter.

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) 751-3535
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.)



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Suggested retail price:

50 gallon	\$715
85 gallon	\$885
105 gallon	\$985

North Star members-only price with your Co-op Connection card

50 gallon	\$599
85 gallon	\$745
105 gallon	\$825

Outages

(Continued from page 1)

Here are the options:

Option 1: The first option would be to not remove any trees but just trim the tree the way the landowner wants it. But then the landowner pays the bill for the trimming each year, plus the member would be liable for any charges stemming from property damage, injuries or any outages caused by the trees as determined by the Cooperative.

Option 2: The next option would be for the landowner to allow us to cut the right of way back and clear trees and shrubs under the line to our satisfaction; then we would work with the member to possibly plant a replacement tree or shrub in a location away from the line on the

landowner’s property. This would, eventually, save us years of trimming, which would save us money.

Option 3: The final option would be to move the existing line or your service to another location or to bury the line underground to get away from trimming trees. This would be a cost also absorbed by the member and at the discretion of the Cooperative.

Now, I will touch on the most important aspect of this situation, and that is the safety factor. If these trees are not trimmed back, there is the potential of fire from the lines touching the trees or bodily injury from the lines touching the trees, or how about a couple of situations

that I know of where kids climbed trees and were electrocuted. No one wants that. How about the safety of our crews in many different areas of this work; downed trees on the line or downed power lines in heavy vegetation that the guys can’t see. Even while just trimming, things can happen.

So as much as we all like trees, we need to keep this right of way clear so that our crews can easily maintain those power lines and we can provide reliable, dependable service to you. Thank you for your understanding.

God Bless you and our Troops,
Dan

New Nomination Process for Director Election

As approved last fall, with a Bylaw amendment by the membership, this will be the first year that Nominating Committees will not be used to identify candidates for director elections. Anyone interested in running for the North Star Electric Cooperative Board of Directors should review the following information from the North Star Electric Cooperative By-Laws Article IV, Board of Directors, Section 3, Qualifications, as well as the new nomination procedure, Article IV, Section 5, Nominations.

The North Star Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting of the Members is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 12, at the Littlefork/Big Falls High School gymnasium. The Board of Director positions up for elections are:

District 8 – 4-year term

District 6 – complete final 2 years of a 4-year term

Your district number is printed on your electric bill. If you are interested in a position on the Board of Directors, you may pick up a petition form at our North Star Electric Cooperative office in either Littlefork or Baudette.

Please be advised that each membership of the North Star Electric Cooperative is allowed one signature, and in the case of joint membership, only one signature is allowed. (A husband and wife are not joint members unless they have completed a joint membership application.)

SECTION 3. QUALIFICATIONS.

All persons eligible to become or remain a director of the Cooperative shall:

(a) be a member in good standing of the Cooperative receiving electric service at the member's primary residence in the district from which the director is to be elected prior to being nominated for director;

For purposes of these bylaws, "primary residence" shall mean the residence that is the chief or main residence of the person and where the person actually

lives for the most substantial portion of the year:

(b) have voting rights within the district from which the director is to be elected;

(c) not be employed by, materially affiliated with or have a material financial interest in any director, individual or entity which either is:

(1) directly or substantially competing with the Cooperative; or

(2) selling goods and services in substantial quantity to the Cooperative; or

(3) possessing a substantial conflict of interest with the Cooperative;

For purposes of this section, the terms "material" or "substantially" shall be interpreted as constituting a minimum of 5 percent of a member's total hours of employment sales or income on an annual basis:

(d) not be an employee or not have been an employee of the Cooperative within the last three (3) years;

(e) not be a close relative of an employee, where as found in these bylaws "close relative" means any individual who is, either by blood, law, or marriage, including step, half, foster and adoptive is either a spouse, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, brother or sister.

(f) be only one, and not more than one, member of a joint membership; provided, however, that none shall be eligible to become or remain a director or to hold a position of trust in the Cooperative

unless all shall meet the qualifications hereinabove set forth;

(g) if a representative or agent of a member is not a natural person i.e. a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or similar, then the representative or agent designated as a nominee for director shall be an individual residing within the external boundaries of the district from which (s)he is nominated; and

(h) agree to regularly attend all board, annual and special members' meetings, and in no case have more than four (4) unexcused absences within a twelve (12) month period of time.

Nothing contained in this section shall affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the board of directors.

(i) Exceptions. In regard to the restrictive provisions of this section that are based upon close relative relationships, no incumbent director shall lose eligibility to remain a director or to be re-elected a director if, during a director's incumbency, a director becomes a first kindred relative of another incumbent director or of a Cooperative employee because of a marriage or an adoption to which the director was not a party.

(j) Disqualification. After the board of directors determines that a director or a nominee for director lacks eligibility under the provisions of this section or as may be provided elsewhere in these bylaws, it shall be the duty of the board to promptly make a disqualification. After the board of directors determines that any person being considered for or already holding a directorship lacks eligibility under this section it shall be the duty of the board of directors to withhold such position from such person or to cause a director to be removed therefrom, as the case may be.

SECTION 5. NOMINATIONS.

The procedures and methods of nominating candidates for election as a director of the cooperative are hereby established:

Nominations by Petition. Any twenty (20) or more members of a district of the cooperative may make nominations in writing over their signatures not less than sixty (60) days prior to the annual meeting, and the Secretary of the board of directors shall post the petition at the principal office of the cooperative, Baudette, Minnesota; such listing of nominations by petition may be mailed to each member through the medium of the cooperative newsletter.



Safe Electricity offers tips to stay safe after severe storms

Electrical hazards associated with storms could cause serious injuries

Safe Electricity cautions everyone to be mindful of the electrical hazards that storms and flooding can leave in their wake, and offers vital safety tips to avoid electrocution and serious injury when dealing with the aftermath of a major storm or disaster.

“The danger does not end when the storm does,” says Molly Hall, Executive Director of Safe Electricity. “People can be hurt or killed by hazards left behind. It’s wise to be cautious in any clean-up effort.”

Stay away from downed power lines and be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Treat all downed or hanging power lines as if they are energized. Warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility.

Keep in mind a downed power line that is energized can cause other things around it to become potentially hazardous. A fence or guardrail touching a downed line can be energized for several thousand yards, and this poses a threat to anyone coming into contact with these structures. Also, stay away from puddles of water in contact with downed lines. Encountering these objects can be as

hazardous as coming into contact with the downed power line itself.

If after a storm or disaster, the power to your home is out for a prolonged period, know important safety rules, such as never using a charcoal or gas grill to cook inside! And if you use a standby generator, make sure a transfer safety switch is used, or connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator. (363-33-001-02 Jim Levasseur) This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, what’s known as “back feed.” Back feed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power.

“Before re-entering storm-damaged buildings or rooms, be sure all electric and gas services are turned off,” says Hall. “Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you can’t reach your breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter.”

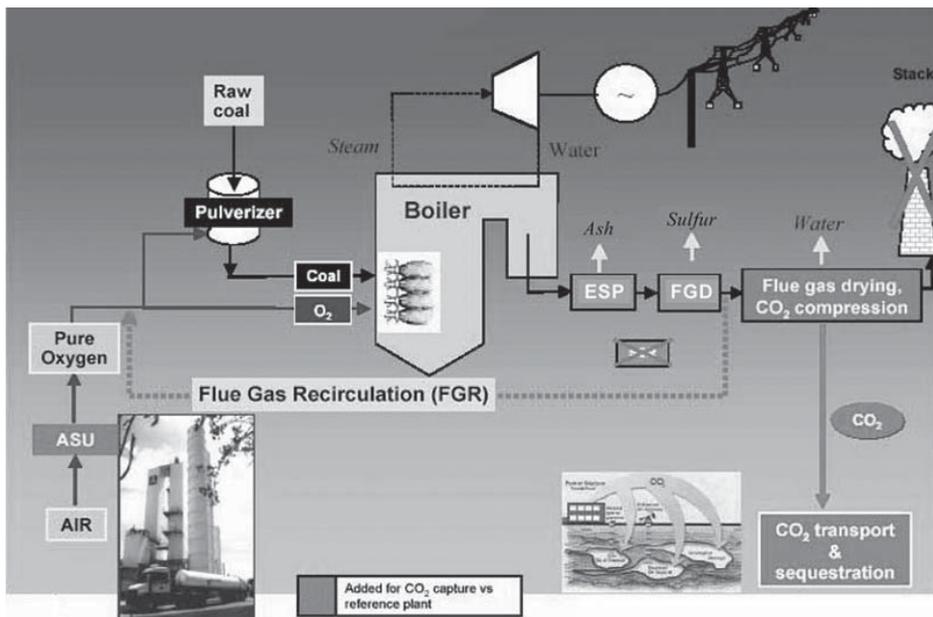
Never step into a flooded basement or other area if water is covering electrical outlets, appliances or cords. Be alert to any electrical equipment that could be energized and in contact with water. Never touch electrical appliances, cords or wires while you are wet or standing in water.

If using electric yard tools in clean-up efforts, do not operate them if it’s raining or the ground is wet, or while you are wet or standing in water. Keep all electric tools and equipment at least 10 feet away from wet surfaces.

Cleaning up and using water-damaged appliances also carries safety risks. Electric motors in appliances that have been drenched or submerged should be thoroughly cleaned and reconditioned before they are put back into service. It may be necessary to repair or replace electrical appliances or tools that have been in contact with water. Do not use any water-damaged appliance until a professional has checked it out.

For more information on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org. Spanish versions of electrical safety information also are available on this Web site.

Safe Electricity is an electrical safety public awareness program created and supported by a coalition of several dozen organizations, including electric utilities and cooperatives, educators and other entities committed to promoting electrical safety.



Statement of Nondiscrimination

North Star Electric Cooperative, Incorporated is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities 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.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Ann Ellis, Finance Manager. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call toll free (866)632-9992 (voice) or (800)877-8339 (TDD) or (866)377-8642 (relay voice users). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

New coal plant designed to emit zero greenhouse gases

Construction has started on a new coal-fired power plant in Germany that will emit zero greenhouse gases when it comes on line in 2008, according to Vattenfall, the Swedish company that designed the plant.

However, the new plant is less efficient than current coal-based power plants. Electricity produced from the plant will also cost more than from traditional coal plants because of a process called oxyfuel. Oxyfuel is a new process where coal is burned in a steam chamber with pure oxygen and the smoke is cleaned, separated from the carbon dioxide and liquefied. The result is zero carbon dioxide emissions, according to Vattenfall.

Source: Electric Co-op Today

2006 continues flat temperature trend

Recent headlines have trumpeted 2006 as one of the warmest years on record, with the United Nations' World Meteorological Organization (WMO) saying 2006 was the sixth warmest since the mid-19th century.

But that is not the same as saying global temperatures are rising. The WMO still counts 1998 as the warmest year on record. Last year's sixth-place ranking continues a trend of global average temperatures having fallen slightly since 1998.

At the same time, worldwide carbon dioxide emissions have continued to grow. Nations that have ratified the Kyoto treaty have not only failed to meet their CO₂ reduction commitments but have actually increased emissions.

Critics of the global warming theory have pointed out that if carbon dioxide were capable of independently driving temperatures, they should be showing a steady increase as atmospheric CO₂ concentrations rise, instead of falling like they are doing.

Meanwhile, in the same week it announced its sixth-place ranking of 2006, the WMO said "no firm link can yet be drawn between human-induced climate change and variations in intensity and frequency of tropical cyclones," according to the U.N. News Service.

Following widespread predictions of intense tropical storm damage rivaling that of 2005, no hurricane made landfall in the United States during the 2006 season.

Meth:

An American gothic horror

Methamphetamine is a highly toxic and addictive drug made in make-shift labs using mostly common household chemicals. Meth labs may be set up at homes, campgrounds, rest areas, rental properties . . . just about anywhere a “cooker” thinks he can get away with the smell in solitude for a couple of hours.

Though most users are unemployed or blue-collar rural white men aged 25-40, use among rural high school and even junior high students is growing. State police say meth makers they’ve arrested include a grandmother in her late 60s, a suburbanite in a \$300,000 home and one pharmaceutical researcher pulling in a six-figure salary.

You can help police stop illegal meth labs by learning the signs and reporting them to the police.

How can you recognize a meth lab?

Alone, any of these activities or signs may not mean meth manufacturing is occurring. However, a combination of them may indicate a problem:

- Strong odors of solvents or ammonia coming from the house, garage or detached buildings.
- Windows blacked out or curtains always drawn.
- Exhaust fans running constantly; windows open in all weather.
- Excessive trash with numerous empty bottles and containers, coffee filters with red stains and lithium batteries that have been broken open.
- Visitors and activity at all hours.
- Person doesn’t work, yet seems to have money, pays bills with cash.
- Presence of weapons, especially sawed-off shotguns, handguns.
- Extensive security in place, or odd “No Trespassing” signs posted or boldly painted on buildings.

How to recognize meth labs and meth cookers in your community

- Presence of precursors used to make meth – multiple packages of cold tablets containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, cans of engine starter fluid, camping fuel, antifreeze, drain cleaner, salt, acids, jugs, jars and bottles, funnels and tubing, propane or pressurized tanks (often stained with blue-green corrosion and fitted with make-shift valves).

How can you tell if someone is using meth?

Symptoms may include:

- Inability to sleep or eat.
- Nervous physical activity, like scratching, rocking, wringing of hands.
- Irritability, dizziness or confusion.
- Severe weight loss.
- Flushed or tense appearance.
- Chemical odors on breath or clothes.
- Excessive sweating, body odor.
- Rapid speech; rambling conversation.
- Rotting teeth, poor hygiene.
- Scars, acne and open sores.
- Paranoia, depression.

Warnings:

If you think you’ve found remnants of a meth lab on your property or along a roadside, get away from it. Discarded meth labs are toxic hazards that can include anhydrous ammonia and/or hydrochloric acid in unsuitable containers. Their contents can explode or be released if moved or even jarred slightly. (785-30-007-02 Mark Presler) Call your sheriff’s department or the nearest state police post.

If you observe trespassers or suspect people are on your property making meth, do not confront them. If they are meth makers, they may be armed. Be safe: call your local police immediately to have them investigate.

Source: *Electric Consumer*



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
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.**
1213 SE 2nd Ave.
Grand Rapids, MN 55744-3984
800-422-0312

**Arrowhead Economic
Opportunity Agency**
702 3rd Ave. S.
Virginia, MN 55792-2797
800-662-5711

2007 Scholarship Winners

FIRST PLACE – \$1,000

		Score
Richie Kennedy	Littlefork/Big Falls	93%

SECOND PLACE – \$400 each

Stephanie Sather	Littlefork/Big Falls	89%
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Sarah Palm	Lake of the Woods	88%
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Jaclyn Halla	International Falls	88%
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Jace Junker – (tie \$200)	Littlefork/Big Falls	86%
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Carlie Waibel – (tie \$200)	Lake of the Woods	86%
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North Star would like to thank all the students who took the time to study and take the test, which was about North Star Electric and rural electric cooperatives. The students who took the test were: Warroad – Natalie Verworn and Eric Beckner; Lake of the Woods – Sam Bredeson, Teresa Slick, Kari Nohner, Jeremiah Speaker, Kirby Borgen, Carlie Waibel, Sarah Palm, Todd Perala and Jennifer Blodgett; Indus – Christopher Dillman, Nick Dougherty; (664-16-016-01 John M. Gearhart) Littlefork/Big Falls – Stephanie Sather, Travis Wegner, Kyle Bloom, Molly Franz, Myles Schafer, Mike Splett, Katie Peterson, Richie Kennedy, Jace Junker, Amanda Clark, Travis Junker, Kaitlyn Dobbs, Maria Nordlund and Hannah Eilers; Int'l Falls – Jaclyn Halla, Joshua Hardy, Meghann Faulkner, Jessica Henrickson, Merle Jesme, Cody Buley, Adam Rasmussen, Cullen Anderson, Amy Morrison, Daniel Olson and Krista Skoglund; Orr – Christianne Astleford. These scholarships were made possible from funding of unclaimed capital credits.

Congratulations to this year's winners!



Next Operation Round Up deadline is June 1

The deadline to submit Operation Round Up grant applications is June 1. Community organizations may apply for an Operation Round Up grant by completing and returning an application form, available at either of the North Star offices or from a director of the North Star Electric Community Trust Board. The directors are Pete Granger, Margie Sporlein, Gretchen Thompson, Nancy L. Jewell, Joyce Wheelock, Wendy Boorman and Jean Reichow.

Grants will be awarded to non-profit or community-based organizations that demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the quality of life in our region.

We would like to say thank you to all the North Star members who are participating in the Operation Round Up program. About 80 percent of the membership is contributing to this great cause to help our local communities.

