

The

Enlightener



North Star
Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



VOLUME 50 NUMBER 6

BAUDETTE, MINNESOTA

JUNE 2005

Unclaimed capital credits given to local charitable organizations

More photos on page 8

Otto Lee, representing the Lake of the Woods Food Shelf, receives a check from Mike Hanson, board member from district 5.

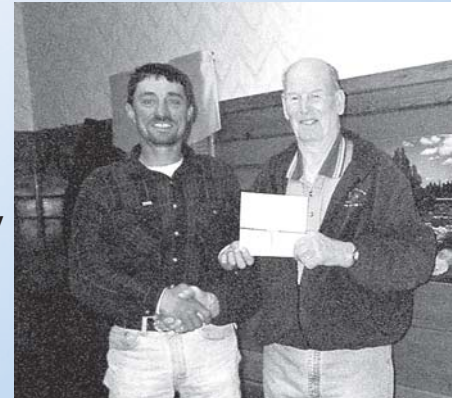


Jim Palm, past board member from district 5, presents a check to Janet Hasbargen for the Indus High School Library.



Lois Lewis, representing the River Valley Development Association, receives a check from Mike Hanson, board member from district 5.

Big Falls Mayor, Wallace Pritchard, receives a check for the Big Falls Community Beautification Project from Allan Nygaard, board member from district 6.



Russ Kingery received a check for the Kabetogama First Responders.

June 2005

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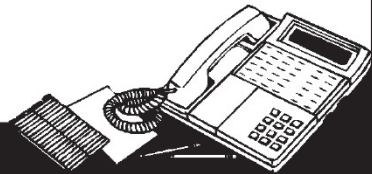
**If calling long distance,
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Monday through Friday**

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



April 2005
Operating Report

Revenue (includes annual seasonal billing)	\$ 681,026
Cost of Power	\$ 349,742
Operation, Maintenance, Administration	\$ 210,837
Depreciation and Interest	\$ 127,269
Margin on Operations	\$ (6,822)
Average use per Residential	1,371
Total kWhs Sold	8,792,701

**More customer appreciation
day winners!**

*Our thanks to everyone
who came out last month
for our third annual
customer appreciation
days.*



Emma Morgan was the lucky winner of a \$25 gift certificate for the kid's drawing at Littlefork.



Cordie Davis from Littlefork was the lucky winner of the Lock-N-Go grill at our member appreciation day at Littlefork.



David Trappe from Littlefork was the lucky winner of the electric cart grill at the member appreciation day in Littlefork.

*Congratulations to
all the winners!*

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 \$2 delinquent notice fee.



By Dan Hoskins
General Manager

Electricity: what a ride!

Approximately 253 years ago, in 1752, Benjamin Franklin proved that lightning and the spark from amber was one and the same thing. The story of this famous milestone is a familiar one, in which Franklin fastened an iron spike to a silken kite, which he flew during a thunderstorm while holding the end of the kite string by an iron key. When lightning flashed, a tiny spark jumped from the key to his wrist. The experiment proved Franklin's theory, but this was extremely dangerous, and besides being very wise, he was very lucky – he could easily have been killed!

Electromagnet invented

The credit for generating electric current on a practical scale goes to the famous English scientist, Michael Faraday. Faraday was greatly interested in the invention of the electromagnet, but his brilliant mind took earlier experiments still further. If electricity could produce magnetism, why couldn't magnetism produce electricity? In 1831, Faraday found the solution; electricity could be produced through magnetism by motion. He discovered that when a magnet was moved inside a coil of copper wire, a tiny electric current flowed through the

wire. Of course, by today's standards, Faraday's electric dynamo, or electric generator, was crude and provided only a small electric current, but he discovered the first method of generating electricity by means of motion in a magnetic field.

Light bulb invented

In 1878, Joseph Swan, a British scientist, invented the incandescent filament lamp, and within 12 months, Thomas Edison made a similar discovery in America. He searched a long time and tested many different types of material to create the elements for his light bulbs. Bamboo made the best filament for his bulbs, so he sent his assistant all over the world looking for different types of bamboo; he finally discovered that the bamboo from Kyoto, Japan, worked the best because they were the right texture for this application and they lasted longer. Swan and Edison later set up a joint company to produce the first practical filament lamp.

REA established

On May 11, 1935, in Washington, D.C., President Franklin Roosevelt issued the executive order establishing the REA (Rural Electrification Administration). This was the beginning of the electrification of our rural countrysides. The beginning of our rural electric cooperatives. And, also, the beginning of an adventure that has changed the very way we

live, work and play.

This year, North Star Electric Cooperative will be celebrating our 65th year at our annual meeting at the Littlefork/Big Falls High School on October 14. (673-25-010-05 Richard Mettler) For the past 65 years, we have seen your lives change, as well as ours. The way you do things, and the way we do things, has changed dramatically.

Dependable and low cost

But the one constant thing that hasn't changed is the way we distribute the product right to your home or business or place of need, and you utilize it for your many purposes. We still distribute our product to you reliably, dependably and at our lowest cost, and I might add, we appreciate, so much, the opportunity to do this.

One more thing

So, we have touched on a little history, and speaking of history, one more thing: I mentioned some of the people we are familiar with in history and electricity (other than lightning), but did you know that knowledge of electricity goes back as far as 900 B.C. when Magnus, a Greek shepherd, walked across a field of black stones that pulled the iron nails out of his sandals and the iron tip from his shepherd's staff (authenticity not guaranteed), and in 600 B.C., Thales of Miletos rubbed amber (*elektron* in Greek) with cat fur and picked up bits of feathers.

So, anyway, where would we be without those forefathers that have been so ingenious? Let's think about it, maybe a propane curling iron, or how about a fuel oil microwave or a diesel-powered blender; here's a good one, how about a gas lamp, oh, that's right; been there and done that!

So, on behalf of the employees and directors of North Star Electric Cooperative, Thank You for allowing us to serve you, our Members!

God Bless you and our Troops,
Dan

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.

■ Koochiching and St. Louis counties:

Lee Herseth

10078 Gappa Road

Ray, MN 56669

Phone: (218) 875-3028

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

■ Roseau and Lake of the Woods counties:

Laurence Otto

60426 County Road 12

Warroad, MN 56763

Phone: (218) 386-2299

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



Office notes

From Ann Ellis, Manager of Finance and Administration

“Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible”

author unknown

Budget billing

Now is the time of year to be talking with Pat in the billing department about getting on budget billing. She will estimate what your average monthly bill would be to take the hills and valleys out of the cash flow for you. Another nice feature that she can set you up with is automatic payment (ACH) from your checking or savings account. (373-10-012-02 Roger/Carol Birkeland) Never worry about making the due date again, and keep your money until the last day as we process it on the due date.

When the AMR (automated meter reading) project is completed, these two billing services would eliminate the need for you to mail us anything. If you're interested, please call Pat at 634-2202 or toll-free at 888-634-2202.

AMR

If you have a new electronic meter, please keep reading it until we let you know when the project is ready to start reading it for you.

At your service we remain . . .

Hanson receives Red Lantern Award

Michael Hanson, North Star Electric Cooperative board member from district 5, holds the Red Lantern Award he received at Minnkota Power Cooperative's 2005 annual meeting held this last April in Grand Forks, N.D.

The award recognizes delegates who have served 10 years as members of their distribution cooperative board of directors.



Power quality service

For only \$4.95 per month, North Star will install surge protection in your home. This includes a meter base unit, an 8-outlet surge strip and a cube receptacle. For more information, call Wayne today at:

Baudette 218-634-2202

Toll-Free 888-634-2202

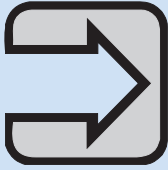


Strawberry-rhubarb cheesecake bars

- ¾ cup margarine or butter, softened
- ⅓ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1½ cups flour
- ½ cup coarsely chopped pecans
- 2 (8 ounce) pkgs. regular or reduced fat cream cheese, softened
- 2 eggs
- 1¾ cups sugar, divided
- 2 tsps. vanilla
- ¾ pound fresh or frozen rhubarb, coarsley chopped (3 cups)
- 1 cup sliced fresh strawberries (8 medium)
- 4 tsps. cornstarch
- ¼ cup water
- ½ cup finely chopped pecans

Grease 9x13 inch baking pan. Heat oven to 375°. Combine margarine, brown sugar, flour and coarsely chopped pecans; press on bottom of greased pan. Bake until browned (10 to 12 minutes). Combine cream cheese, eggs, ¾ cup of the sugar and vanilla in bowl; beat until smooth. Pour over crust; return to oven and bake until cheesecake is set (about 20 minutes). In large saucepan, combine rhubarb, remaining 1 cup sugar and strawberries. Dissolve cornstarch in water; stir into fruit mixture. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring constantly, until rhubarb is tender and mixture is thickened (8 to 10 minutes). Cool slightly; spread fruit mixture over cheesecake. Sprinkle top with finely chopped pecans; refrigerate 8 hours or overnight. Cut into squares. Makes 12 to 16 servings.

Submitted by:
Gunder Hallan
Littlefork, Minn.
North Star Electric
Director



West End News

By Steve Ellis

Baudette District Operations Supervisor



Summer storms will be upon us soon; remember to never touch a downed power line as it may still be energized. Please notify North Star Electric of any downed wires or out-of-the-ordinary things that you may notice on or near our lines.

AMR (automated meter reading) has been installed on the feeders coming out of the Wheelers Point substation and we are working some of the small bugs out of this system. This substation should be completed and totally operational by the end of July. The Kabetogama substation is also well on its way to total implementation. Our plan is to have our whole system AMR read by the end of 2006. PLEASE! Continue to read and send your meter readings into us, as usual, until we have notified you to do otherwise.

New service plans, anyone? If you do plan on building, or just simply need to upgrade your existing service, please contact us well in advance, so that your project may be scheduled.

Please be careful around overhead lines, as they are very dangerous when working around them. Always keep in mind their presence; if you see or have any questions about your power lines, contact us for help.

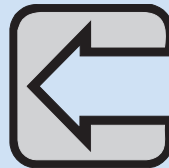
GSOC (Gopher State One Call) ... If you plan to do any digging, please remember that it is a law that you MUST contact GSOC before you do any digging. The ground is crawling with more than worms; it's full of wires and cables of all kinds! To save yourself, and most likely many others, the inconvenience and cost, do plan your project well in advance, and notify GSOC first ... 1-800-252-1166.



East End News

By Allan Baumgartner

Littlefork District Operations Supervisor



Construction work has started at a pretty good pace this spring. We are building new services, and calls are coming in daily with questions from prospective new members. Easements, memberships, credit letters and wiring certificates are all forms that have to be completed. Then, right-of-way clearing, payment of service fees, staking and staking sheets of the job and Gopher State One Call (with a two-day waiting period) are all requirements prior to getting a new electrical service started. This poor weather we've been having may delay some jobs. So, if you're planning on a new service, please make sure you call well in advance of your needs.

All of our material is now in for our Work Plan jobs. We will be installing new underground cable at three different locations and setting new poles for these jobs. We also have seven new voltage regulators and quite a few new oil circuit breakers to install on our lines to improve our operations.

Our crew has changed out two 3-phase poles that were rejected during our last pole testing and have 10 to 12 more left to do. Most of the poles are by Rainy Lake and have underground wire attached to them. We will be testing approximately 2,000 more poles this summer in the Baudette and Littlefork areas.

The crew has all but 30 off-peak meters changed out to our new AMR (automated meter reading) meters. Letters have been sent out to the members with off-peak meters that we haven't been able to change yet. Our AMR equipment is in, and work will start next week at the Kabetogama substation for this.

In May, we had nine individual outages and four mainline outages caused by two trees, a pickup hitting a guy wire and a scheduled outage for maintenance work.

North Star offices will be closed on July 4

in observance of Independence Day



Neither rain, nor snow, nor the dark of night ...



Electric co-op line workers are trained to deal with any power emergency. But there's one thing that can't be taught: dedication. Dedication to duty is a quality line workers are born with. That's why you'll see them in a driving storm repairing downed power lines. That's why your power is restored in the middle of the night.

That's why they decided to be line workers in the first place. And they expect no special awards or recognition.

It's reward enough for them to know your family is safe and warm – regardless of the weather.

Top 10 ways to prevent outdoor electrical accidents

Tis the season to get out the shovels, kites, baseballs and outdoor power tools. Before you get too far into your spring and summer activities, be sure to take note of our list of top 10 ways to stay safe around electricity outdoors:

1. Select Power Tools Designed for Outdoor Use – Make sure they are double-insulated or have three-way grounded plugs.

2. Be careful to Avoid Cutting Through Power Cords – Watch the positioning of cords that feed electricity to power saws, trimmers and drills to ensure they are not inadvertently damaged when the tools are in use.

3. Use GFCIs when Outdoors – GFCIs shut off power to prevent serious shock. GFCI protection is required for outdoor areas, crawl spaces and garages. Portable GFCIs are available.

4. Stay Away from Overhead Power Lines and High-Voltage Towers – Overhead wires and other tower equipment carry high-voltage electricity. When carrying and using ladders and other long objects, keep them at least 10 feet away from all overhead lines. Never touch or climb on high-voltage towers.

5. Avoid Flying Kites and Balloons Near Power Lines – A kite or balloon touching a power line can cause a shock or fire, so be sure to stay in areas clear of power lines. Metallic balloons, which are conductive, should be kept indoors.

6. Stay Away from Fallen Power Lines – Fallen lines can be dangerous even when not sparking. Notify your cooperative and call 911 immediately. If you are caught in a vehicle near fallen lines, wait in your vehicle until rescuers come. If you must leave the vehicle, jump clear of fallen lines. Do not touch the vehicle and ground at the same time. Land with feet together and shuffle away.

7. Use Caution when Working and Playing Around Trees – Before trimming trees that are near overhead power lines, contact your electric utility. Warn children not to climb trees that are near power lines.

8. Call Before Digging – Before digging or moving earth in any way, call Gopher State One Call at 1-800-252-1166.

9. Take Care Around Transformers – Do not dig near transformers or try to pry them open. Transformers are kept locked inside sturdy metal containers for safety. If you happen to find one unlocked, stay away and call your cooperative immediately.

10. Stay Out of Substations – If a stray ball or other toy accidentally lands inside a nearby substation, do not try to retrieve it yourself. Call your cooperative for assistance.

Have a fun, productive and safe spring and summer!

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**
312 N. Main St.
P.O. Box 67
Badger, MN 56714-0067
Phone: 218-528-3258 or 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 or 218-749-2912

Gopher State One Call



It's the LAW

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

Minnesota Statewide One Call
Notification Center

1-800-252-1166

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.

Highlights of the board of directors meeting

May 11, 2005

These are the highlights from the board of directors meeting held on May 11, 2005. 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.

All directors were present. They acted upon usual, routine business. In addition, they voted to accept an offer from a group of neighboring electric cooperatives who would like to market WildBlue satellite Internet in our area, to authorize the payment of discounted estate capital credits applied for in 2005, to recommend to the membership bylaw changes that would expand the window during which nominations for directorship can be made, expand on the qualifications of a director, remove nominations from the floor, but retain the nominations made by committee or petition, add a second method for removal of a board member, and require a majority of members voting to liquidate 25% or more of the property of the Cooperative.

Management and operations report

Manager Hoskins reported that most of the AMR meters have been installed from the Wheelers Point substation and good progress is being made from the Kabetogama substation, Emergency Response plans, contract construction, outages, temporary summer help, safety recognition, upcoming First Aid/CPR training for employees, plans to go through the Safety Accreditation process, and a potential new 2.5 MW service.

Office report

Finance Manager Ellis provided the financial report and reported on office activities including cleaning up past-due accounts receivable, plans to look at load limiters for problem accounts, a possible sales tax refund on the margin portion of members' bills that will someday be repaid (capital credits), success with many of the new AMR meters, opportunities for improving efficiency of handling members' payments, plans to continue offering the seasonal rate when AMR is implemented, and accounting for the sale of the DirecTV franchise.

Compliance and member services report

Manager of Compliance and Member Services Haukaas reported on load management activity, that winter control times were close to what had been estimated, that the CIP (State-mandated Conservation Improvement Program) programs including the compact fluorescent bulbs and ENERGY STAR appliance rebates have been very well received by the members, on the results from the Cooperative Knowledge Scholarship competition, various electrical safety demonstrations and programs being brought to area schools, the full bus that will be taking members to the power plants and coal fields in North Dakota, and that attendance had doubled at the recent Member Appreciation Days.

Board reports

Minnkota Delegate Steve Arnesen reported on their monthly meeting. (242-25-001-02 Clarence Schuh) Directors attending neighboring cooperative annual meetings and legislative visits also reported.

Off-Peak Loan Program for Automatic Backup Systems

If your off-peak backup heating system is in need of repair or replacement, we may be able to help.

North Star Electric will lend up to \$2,500 for upgrading members' existing off-peak backup systems when the following terms and conditions are met:

1. On approved credit.
2. \$2,500 maximum.
3. 6 percent interest.
4. 1 to 3-year term.
5. Payment will be added to existing electric bill (\$25 minimum per month).
6. \$35 filing fee.
7. Must be existing off-peak member.
8. Automatic backup system only (no wood or manual systems).
9. Must furnish sales receipt from contractor or vendor.
10. Job must be completed before loan is approved for payment by our member services department.
11. Outstanding loan balance at termination of service is due in full.



Bruce Polkinghorne, board member from district 7, presents a check to the Littlefork Women's VFW Auxiliary for the purchase of phone cards for our local servicemen and women overseas. Pictured from left to right are Bruce Polkinghorne, Sue Cole, Violet Polkinghorne, Sally Merritt and General Manager Dan Hoskins.



Unclaimed capital credits given to local charitable organizations



Nancy Jewell and Velma Lund, representing the Williams Multi Activity Center, receive a check from Randy Bergan, board member from district 3.



Tina Meyers, representing the Littlefork/Big Falls School District #362 annual staff, receives a check from Gunder Hallan, board member from district 8.



Steve Arnesen, board member from district 1, gave a tour of the Young Station and BNI Coal to a group of 25 high school students from Lake of the Woods High School District #390.



Tony Palm, representing the Lake of the Woods Ambulance and Fire Department, receives a check from Mike Trueman, board member from district 2.