

The

# Enlightener



North Star  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



VOLUME 49 NUMBER 8

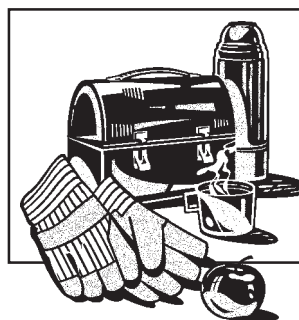
BAUDETTE, MINNESOTA

AUGUST 2004

## An energizing quiz for the new school year

Answers for the Energizing Quiz  
are listed on page 2, column 1.

1. How fast does electricity travel?
  - a. the speed of light
  - b. 184,000 miles per second
  - c. the speed of sound
  - d. warp speed
2. Kinetic energy plus potential energy equals . . .
  - a. thermal energy
  - b. radiant energy
  - c. chemical energy
  - d. mechanical energy
3. When you microwave your burrito for lunch, the microwave is vibrating the burrito's molecules and infusing it with . . .
  - a. thermal energy
  - b. kinetic energy
  - c. potential energy
  - d. mechanical energy
4. Einstein's  $E=mc^2$  theory performs what function?
  - a. converts energy into steam
  - b. converts mass into energy
  - c. converts light into heat
  - d. converts heat into time travel
5. Electric energy is made . . .
  - a. by forcing protons to move faster within the atom
  - b. by stopping neutrons from moving outside of the atom
  - c. by combining protons, neutrons and electrons into quarks
  - d. by forcing electrons to flow from atom to atom
6. Which inventor is credited with inventing a safe lightning rod for a neighbor's house?
  - a. Georg Ohm
  - b. James Watt
  - c. Benjamin Franklin
  - d. Thomas A. Edison
7. Where does the term "electricity" come from?
  - a. the Latin word for fire
  - b. the Greek word for amber
  - c. the Italian word for lightning
  - d. the Egyptian word for oil
8. The electricity to run a color TV costs . . .
  - a. between \$1 and \$2 an hour
  - b. between 50¢ and \$1 per hour
  - c. between 10¢ and 20¢ per hour
  - d. between 2¢ and 5¢ per hour
9. The electricity to run a 14 cu. ft. frost-free refrigerator costs . . .
  - a. \$20 to \$30 per month
  - b. \$9 to \$19 per month
  - c. \$6 to \$13 per month
  - d. \$2 to \$10 per month



**North Star  
Electric offices  
will be closed  
Mon., Sept. 6  
for Labor Day.**

# The Enlightener

August 2004

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**DirecTV® Problems**  
1-888-923-7772

*Answers for the Energizing Quiz printed on  
page 1:*

1. a; 2. d; 3. a; 4. b; 5. d; 6. b; 7. c; 8. d; 9. b

**Electrical  
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## June 2004 Operating Report

Revenue . . . . .	\$ 579,025
Cost of Power . . . . .	\$ 300,112
Operation, Maintenance, Administration . . . . .	\$ 160,883
Depreciation, Interest . . . . .	\$ 131,525
Margin on Operations . . . . .	\$ (13,495)
Average use per Residential . . . . .	874
Total kWhs Sold . . . . .	6,249,558

# Visit Us at the FAIR

Lake of the Woods County Fair in Baudette  
August 26-29



**Register  
to win  
great prizes!**

## WE NEED YOUR METER READING!

Please read your meter on or as near the 25<sup>th</sup> of EACH month as possible. We must have your reading by the 5<sup>th</sup> 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.*



# Our appreciation . . .

By Dan Hoskins  
General Manager

There are so many ways to express your appreciation for many different things, but what I would like to do is to express our North Star Electric Cooperative appreciation to our DBS customers for the last ten years. July 1, 1994, was the date of our first DBS subscriber, and July 14, 2004, was the last day of our DBS business with over 2400 subscribers.

I am sure that most of you, by now, have heard the news concerning the DirecTV buyout of NRTC's Master Distribution Agreement (MDA) that we have been a part of for the last 10 years. With this purchase of NRTC's MDA by DirecTV, it put your Cooperative's Board of Directors to a very quick decision-making process.

With the size of our area that we serve, and as of the results of the business deal between DirecTV and NRTC, the Board decided that it would not be cost effective to continue in the business without jeopardizing or subsidizing the future of our DBS business, so they made the decision to exit the business at this time. This decision was made after many, very serious considerations of our customers.

Although we are no longer in the business, we feel very confident that

our customers will continue to enjoy their DirecTV service in its new environment and will receive excellent customer care from DirecTV.

North Star Electric Cooperative also appreciates the opportunity given to us 10 years ago by NRTC and DirecTV to be able to bring our customers this great (242-25-015-01 Ronald Schuh) product and service.

This MDA gave us the opportunity, through NRTC, to sell, maintain and service DirecTV equipment and programming to you, our customers, and provide a service for the area. And provide a service we did; for over ten years, North Star Electric Cooperative has worked hard to provide satellite TV service to areas of our system that could not get any TV programming either by cable or antenna. We also had loyal customers outside of our service territory, so we were able to provide this service to many people.

I also have a very deep appreciation to some very valuable employees that made this great service to you a reality. You see, Cathy and Walt, (full-time employees) and Lyra and Carolyn (part-time employees), were the backbone of our DBS business, and when the decision to leave the

business was made, so was the very hard decision to release these employees. These people were very professional and dedicated to serving you, the customer, and they will be missed around the office.

We gave you top-notch professional service to your equipment, installations and maintenance in the field while providing the best and most professional customer service in our offices. You responded by giving us your business faithfully for over ten years, and for that, North Star Electric Cooperative, our employees and our Board of Directors would like to say thank you; we appreciated the business and the opportunity to serve you.

Thank you and God Bless,  
Dan

## Northern Minnesota District Fair Prize Winners

*(Littlefork)*

### Grand prize winner Deluxe Cart Grill

Dave Lilja

### 2nd prize winner Lock-N-Go Grill

Audrey Horne

### Kids Drawing \$25.00 Gift Certificate

Molly Baldwin

### Nightly Drawing Surge Protector

LeAnn Sather  
Troy Promersberger  
Dennis Ice

## 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, Office Manager

*Household Tip: Pine pitch on your clothes? Joan Aery suggests WD40 to remove the pitch, then treat the WD40 spot and launder as usual – it works!*

## Annual Meeting Planning Begins

### Nominating committees selected

Members in Districts 1, 4, and 5 will be electing their board representation at the October 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting at the Lake of the Woods School. The process begins with the Nominating Committees which are charged with the task of identifying two members from each of their districts to run for the fall election. The nominating committees are:

#### District 1

Robert Harris  
Lloyd Hanson  
LM (Butch) Akers  
Edward Hodgson

#### District 4

David Wohlrabe  
Howard Mord  
John (Jack) Krouss  
Eileen Olson

#### District 5

Soren Olesen  
Linda Lafky  
Karen Anderson  
Zelpha Crawford

The Nominating Committees will present candidates to the board for approval at the September board meeting. If you or someone you know is interested in a board position, please

contact someone on the Nominating Committee in your district before September 1st.

Your district number is printed on your billing statement.

### DirecTV conversion of accounts

DirecTV began converting subscriber accounts to new account numbers on July 15<sup>th</sup> and this manual process will occur over a few weeks. Subscribers will have two bills in one month—the final bill associated with North Star’s business and a first bill with DirecTV. If you have a credit on your final bill, DirecTV will be taking care of getting that back to you.

Just a reminder about TV payments...they all go to DirecTV, so if your bill still says to pay (783-17-001-04 Elizabeth/Henry Hyatt) North Star (meaning your account had not been converted yet), be sure to send it with a separate check and be aware that when we receive it, we must forward it to DirecTV for processing. This will cause a delay.

### Vikings football

If you’ve purchased the NFL Sunday Ticket so you can watch the Vikings, remember that many of the Vikings games will be available on your local FOX station. If you are receiving the Fargo or Duluth FOX stations, you may want to think about calling 1-800-DIRECTV to cancel your NFL Sunday Ticket BEFORE the season starts and get a full refund.

## Cold weather disconnects

Section 216B.097 was added to the Public Utilities Act effective Aug. 1, 1991. The law provides that cooperatives and municipal utilities cannot disconnect a residential consumer between Oct. 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heating source, provided that certain conditions are met.

The conditions include that the member must declare, on forms provided by the cooperative, an inability to pay, and the household income of the customer is less than 50 percent of the state median income. Another major change this winter is that any member who is receiving energy assistance is eligible. In addition, the customer’s account must be current for the billing period immediately prior to Oct. 15, or in the alternative, the customer has entered into and is reasonably current on a mutually acceptable payment schedule. Several agencies provide financial assistance to qualifying households. We urge you to check with them for details on available programs.

To avoid electric disconnection, arrangements for bill payment need to be made before the line crew is sent to collect. Do not disregard your bill. It is your responsibility. If you have financial difficulties, please contact our office to discuss payment arrangements.

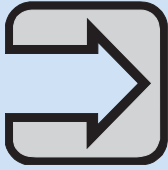
# Have you filled your tank yet?



## 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**



## West End News

By Steve Ellis

Baudette District Operations Supervisor

We have had a busy summer so far this year. Here's just a short run-down of projects that we have been working on.

**Work plan project south of Baudette** – we are replacing and upgrading four miles of V-phase line which feeds the Carp, Rako and Hay Creek areas.

**Lake of the Woods road jobs**, which include North Star Electric relocating our overhead and underground facilities. On County Road #73 NW of Baudette, we will be relocating and doing some upgrades of lines in the process. On County Road #4, also known as the Graceton Beach Road, we have moved and upgraded approximately 1½ miles of overhead and will be replacing about one-half mile of underground on the north end of this project. Roseau County Road #34, north of Roosevelt, which goes west past the Leona Town Hall, has us moving about two miles of overhead lines and one-half mile of underground.

In the past month, the crew (121-41-047-05 Kelly Fast) has built 21 new services and retired two. They have also had 34 outages caused mostly by storms. All of this, on top of our usual service orders for repair and maintenance, has kept everyone quite busy.

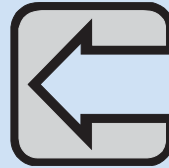
One thing that always seems to come up is right of way for our lines. Remember that we have approximately 1,000 miles of over headlines that need to have the right of way kept clean and as clear as possible; everyone needs to help in this process. Everyone likes trees but the right of way is not the place for them as they cause outages, lights to blink, and if left long enough without attention, become a major safety hazard. So, please look up before doing any building or planting trees. This area is clear and open for a reason.

Hope everyone is having a safe summer. Thank you.

## East End News

By Allan Baumgartner

Littlefork District Operations Supervisor



Our crews have been concentrating their work schedule on new services and upgrades. We also had two cable replacements and a half-mile underwater service we built on Rainy Lake to Midway Island. The two cable replacements to Harbour and Copenhagen Islands involved new routes and totaled one mile of new cable, but we reeled up 1½ miles of old 1/0 175 mil. cable from the lake that had been installed in 1970. Over the years, we've had quite a few bad lightning strikes in that area that probably played a big part in damaging the old cable.

Our crews will need some time to finish the new 14.4 circuit to Rainy Lake from International Falls which is part of our work plan. Most of this line is built and in place except for about 400 feet on the Van Lynn Road and a little work left to do in the International Falls substation and our Rainy Lake step-down substation.

Outages for the month of July are at about 20, as of July 26th, with causes ranging from lightning storms, trees, dig-ins and animals.

## 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

## Gopher State One Call



It's the LAW

**CALL BEFORE YOU DIG**

Minnesota Statewide One Call  
Notification Center

**1-800-252-1166**

# Highlights of the board of directors meeting

July 7, 2004

These are the highlights from the board of directors meeting held on July 7, 2004. Detailed minutes are available at the Cooperative for member review. Regular board meetings are 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 except Directors Bergan and Trueman. They acted upon usual, routine business. In addition they voted to accept the audit proposal from Hunzleman, Putzier & Co., to approve the policy changes as recommended by the Board Policy Committee and management, and to select the 84 month installment payment for the unavoidable transfer of DirecTV subscribers from North Star to DirecTV. The only option that the Cooperative had to consider was whether or not to continue as a servicer/retailer for DirecTV under their control and reduced income. Financial projections indicated a \$150,000 to \$200,000 annual loss if the cooperative agreed to their terms. Exiting the business would mean the loss of jobs for 3-4 employees whose jobs focused on the DirecTV business. Other business opportunities to utilize these employees were extensively reviewed, but none came close to making up the labor costs that the DirecTV business had supported before the changes. The board voted to exit the DirecTV business and provide severance packages. Manager Hoskins reported that the Cooperative will keep any promises for equipment upgrades and installations.

## Management and Operations Report

Union negotiations are underway. AMR (automated meter reading) options are being reviewed. Right-of-way issues that occur when a County rebuilds a road were discussed.

Embloms will begin their contract construction work south of Pitt in mid-July. Underwater cable is being replaced in areas of Rainy Lake. Right-of-way spraying will be done by Lake States Tree Service.

## Office Report

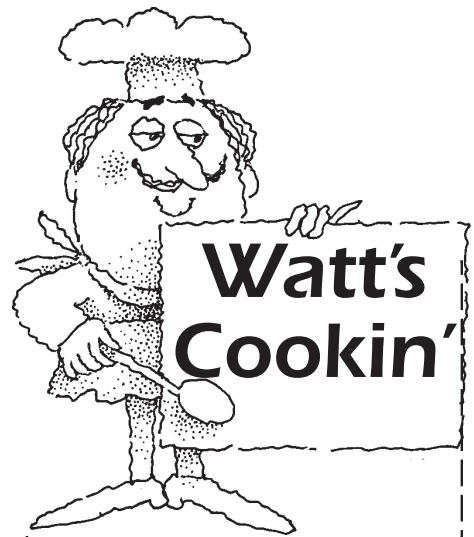
The financial numbers continue to look favorable for the year to date. Over 1200 subscribers who have upgraded their equipment with cost-sharing help from North Star have been activated for local network feeds. Board redistricting will take effect in October which will leave one district unrepresented, and two directors in District 5 (James E. Palm and Mike Hanson). Director Palm has indicated he plans to retire from the board this fall. Nominating Committees will be needed for these two districts in addition to a committee for District 1 (Steve Arnesen). Board members will bring recommended committee membership to the August board meeting for full board approval.

## Compliance and Member Services Report

Local network affiliates in Duluth and Fargo/Grand Forks came on-line with DirecTV on June 17<sup>th</sup>. The agreements with NRTC and DirecTV have changed immensely, which severely restrict our ability at a local level. The Center Tour and presentation at the LFBF elementary school were well received. The satellite that will deliver WildBlue high speed internet via satellite is scheduled to launch in a week with rollout to consumers this winter.

## Bylaw and Articles of Incorporation

Attorney Anderson and Manager Hoskins recommended amendments to the Bylaws and Articles for the membership to vote on at the October Annual Meeting. These changes will be printed in the September Enlightener.



## JoAnn's wonderful broccoli salad

- 2 pounds fresh broccoli flowerettes, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 1 pound sliced bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 2 cups (8 oz.) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup medium red onion, chopped
- 1 cup dried cranberries (craisins)
- 1 cup roasted sunflower seeds

### Dressing:

- 1 cup Miracle Whip
- 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar

Combine broccoli, etc. In another bowl, combine dressing. Add to salad and toss. Chill. Yield 8-10 servings.

Share a favorite recipe with your North Country neighbors!

Send to:  
North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
Attn: The Enlightener  
P.O. Box 719  
Baudette, MN 56623



# Medical alert list

North Star Electric is updating the list of members with medical needs. The members on this list will be notified when an outage occurs. Do you, or someone you know, rely on some type of electrically operated life support equipment that would create a perilous situation if electrical service should be interrupted for any reason?

North Star would like to know about the existence of this type of equipment. We need to know what type of equipment you have and how long your backup system will last.

There is nothing we can do to prevent these members from experiencing power outages. It is necessary for us to be aware of special life-threatening problems, so we can make them a higher priority when power is being restored.

## Odds Facts

- Lemons contain more sugar than strawberries
- A “jiffy” is an actual unit of time for 1/100th of a second
- All polar are left-handed
- Every year, Mexico City sinks about 10 inches
- Nose prints are used to identify pigs, just like human fingerprints
- It takes 12 bees their entire lifetime to make a table-spoon of honey

# North Star Knowledge Scholarship Winners



First place – \$1,000	School
Tyler Verworn	Warroad
Second Place – \$400 each	
Courtney Nelson	Littlefork/Big Falls
Rob Perala	Lake of the Woods
Tabitha Hunter	Warroad
Tanya Donahou	Littlefork/Big Falls

*Congratulations to this year’s winners!*



Randy Bergan, North Star board member from District 3, presents the North Star Knowledge Scholarships to Tabitha Hunter and Tyler Verworn from the Warroad High School.

# Back to school . . . transportation rules!

By Lori Read, SWCE Compliance  
and Training Coordinator

Did you know that almost 23 million students get on buses to go to school every day? Amazing, isn't it? And, that means the 440,000 school buses traveling more than 4 billion miles every year are by all measures, the safest motor vehicles on the highways.

When comparing the number of fatalities of students ages 5-18, during normal school hours, over a 10-year period, school buses were found to be 87 times safer than passenger cars, light trucks and vans. Yet sadly, more than half of the pedestrian fatalities in school bus related crashes were children between 5 and 7 years old.

**Why is that?** One possible cause is younger children still have that bouncing, bubbly enthusiasm for starting each day and riding the bus, and that can sometimes lead to careless actions and fatality-causing accidents.

Here are some reminders, courtesy of Vince and Larry, the crash test dummies, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, to help parents instruct their children on school bus safety:

1. Get to the bus stop about five minutes before the bus is due to arrive. Never run across a street to catch a bus. When you need to cross a street, always look to the left, then to the right and then to the left again. Cars will approach from the left first.

2. Stand at least three (3) giant steps back as the bus approaches. Wait until the bus stops, the door opens and

the driver says it's okay to get on the bus. Never walk behind the bus or close to the side of the bus because those areas are in the driver's blind spot.

3. When on the bus, take your seat quickly, and stay in your seat while the bus is moving. Let the driver concentrate on the road.

4. When getting off the bus, use the handrail. It will help you avoid a crash if you stumble. Important – make sure there's nothing sticking out on you, or your backpack that could get caught in the handrail of the bus or the bus door. When crossing in front of the bus, make sure you're at least five (5) giant steps ahead of the bus so the bus driver can see you and you can see him.

5. Yellow flashing lights on a bus mean it's getting ready to stop and load or unload students. Red flashing lights and the stop sign arm mean the bus has stopped and students are getting on or off.

6. Buses have emergency exits. Although you may never have to use one, you still need to know where they are and how the doors open.

Knowing the transportation rules means safe bus trips for everyone! Have a great year!

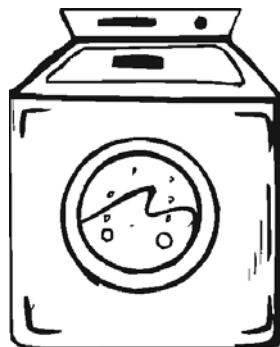


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## Energy saving laundry tips

Energy conservation is on almost everyone's mind these days and you can help the cause by shopping carefully before buying new appliances. Here are some tips for buying and using a washer and dryer:

- Always look for appliances with Energy Star ratings to ensure the most efficient operation.
- Top-of-the-line washing machine models offer automatically adjusting water levels, extra dry spinning that saves energy used by the clothes dryer, and a timer that allows you to load the washer when it's convenient while delaying its start until later in the evening, thereby saving energy during periods of peak demand.
- Some washers and dryers have electronically programmable cycles, to simplify the chore for less experienced family members. Program one set of specifications for sweaters and another for towels.
- Some new models have no agitator so clothes are washed more gently and stay new looking longer.



- Buy the largest-capacity model available for easier handling of bulky items like comforters and rugs.
- Dry consecutive loads to use the heat left from the previous load.
- Don't let the dryer run longer than needed to dry the clothes.
- Keep dryer filters and vents clean.
- Use the lowest possible drying temperature.
- Don't vent the dryer indoors. You may gain a little heat (unwanted heat in the summer) but you are also dumping into your home a lot of lint and other pollutants as well as adding an undesirable amount of moisture to the air. Venting the dryer inside hurts much more than it helps.
- Wash in cold water using a cold water detergent. Use hot water only when absolutely necessary. Always rinse in cold water.
- Wash full loads but don't overload. If you have an adjustable water setting, use it when washing small loads.