

## Heading North

### Electrical line worker school breaks ground in Baudette

The open, rural landscape in Lake of the Woods County isn't the typical backdrop for a budding college campus.

But for those who enjoy the outdoor lifestyle and have a head for heights, it might be the perfect fit.

The empty field next to North Star Electric Cooperative's headquarters in Baudette, Minn., will soon be set to train future generations of electrical line workers. Construction has begun on a new training facility to support two full-time instructors and an incoming class of 31 students.

"It's going to be a very nice facility," said Dan Hoskins, North Star Electric general manager. "Once the community heard about this project, they all came together. The reason it went so smoothly is because everyone has had a positive attitude."

The new school is a satellite program for Minnesota State

Community and Technical College – Wadena (MSCTC), one of only three schools that offer an electrical line worker program in the state.

The school broke ground July 15. It will include several classrooms and an indoor training facility on the east side of North Star's headquarters. A training field on the west side of North Star's headquarters will allow students to construct a power line.

Classes begin in August at nearby Lake of the Woods High School, with the new building set to be ready in fall 2011. During the nine-month course students learn both theory and practical hands-on experience in all phases of power line construction and maintenance.

### Room for growth

Hoskins sees the new school as a win-win for the Lake of the Woods area and MSCTC.

The waiting period to get into MSCTC's line worker program has been about 2-3 years and 140 students long. The Minnesota Rural Electric Association estimates as many as 50,000 new line workers must be trained by 2016 to replace an aging workforce.

"There gets to be a point where we're not serving the needs of the industry," said Monty Johnson, MSCTC dean of

academic and student services. "We follow industry trends and we know we need to prepare for the upcoming wave of retirements. This is a unique opportunity to help fill that void. There's even a chance for us to break into the Canadian market. According to my map, it's not that far away."

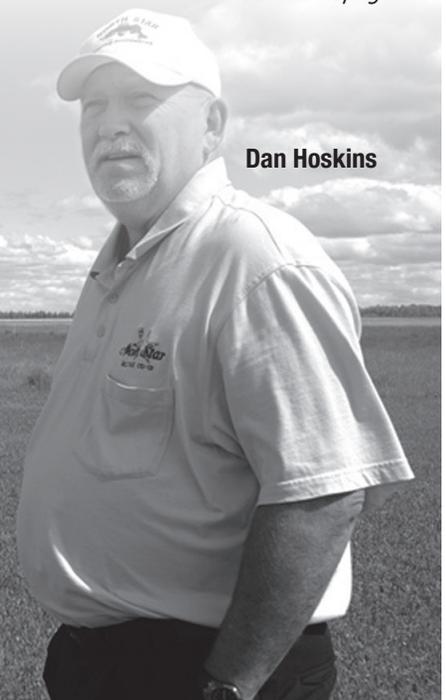
At the same time, Johnson estimates the 31 students could create a positive economic impact of more than \$600,000 in Lake of the Woods County.

"The people in this community are going all out," Johnson said. "This is already a fantastic partnership."

Many students who have spent years waiting to get into nearby programs have been able to jump to the front of the line and now have a chance to finish school ahead of schedule. Johnson said that job placement through MSCTC's program has been nearly 100 percent.

"We want to be a hub for this," Johnson said. "We know right now that our program has been a huge success,

*continued on page 3*



**Dan Hoskins**

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*North Star Electric office will be closed Monday, Sept. 6, in observance of Labor Day.*



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For energy-saving ideas go to  
[togetherwesave.com](http://togetherwesave.com).

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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.*

**Members' corner**

We are adding a section called the members' corner. What we would like is for members to send in questions about your electric Cooperative, and we will answer them for you. Please give us your name and a phone number in case we need to clarify the question, and send them to North Star Electric, PO Box 719, Baudette, MN, 56623, Attn: Wayne.

*Highlights from the* **BOARDROOM**

These are the highlights from the Board of Directors meeting held on July 7, 2010. The board acted upon usual, routine business and voted to slightly amend the property description of the land being donated to the county where they will erect the building to house Wadena's electrical line worker training program, to approve the union contract and to set the annual meeting date for Oct. 8, 2010, at the Lake of the Woods School. Board district population was reviewed to monitor reasonable balance. The Square Butte generating plant is scheduled to be down for 46 days this fall for maintenance, and this may require load control.

Staff reports were provided and included the financial report, the

power plant tour for members, the Minnesota CIP (Conservation Improvement Program), Operation Round Up, distributed generation, strategic planning, the Memorial Day fire at the Williams substation, service upgrades, the MN DOT road work on U.S. Highway 11, seeking a used digger truck to replace the 1994 unit 32, safety hours, outages and plans for a capital credit refund.

Detailed minutes are available at the cooperative for member review. Regular board meetings are generally held the first Wednesday of every month. If you wish to speak with the board, or have an item that you would like to have placed on the agenda, please contact Manager Dan Hoskins at least one week in advance to be included on the agenda.

•••• **Current electrical inspectors** ••••

*State law requires that every new electrical installation in any construction, remodeling, replacement or repair shall file a certificate for inspection with the State Board of Electricity and be inspected by a Minnesota electrical inspector.*

• **St. Louis and Koochiching counties:**  
Bob Orgon  
10111 Roosevelt Rd. S.E.  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
Phone: (218) 556-3829  
Fax: (218) 333-0451  
7 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 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

**Enlightener online**

We are getting a few requests that we no longer mail the *Enlightener* to homes or businesses of our members because the *Enlightener* is available on our website [www.northstarelectric.coop](http://www.northstarelectric.coop). The *Enlightener* is available on our website at the same time or before the *Enlightener* is mailed. Past *Enlightener* issues are also available at the same site. If this is something that you would be interested in doing, please fill out the form below and we will make the change for you. By reading your *Enlightener* online instead of us mailing you the paper copy would save North Star some publishing and mailing costs. Any questions, please give us a call at 634-2202 or 888-634-2202.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Account number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_



A television reporter interviews Dan Hoskins after the July 15 groundbreaking.

and we have a chance to make it even bigger. We're in this for the long haul."

Hoskins has seen the quality produced by MSCTC firsthand. Eleven of North Star's 13 operations department staff members are MSCTC graduates.

"I have great respect for what they've been able to do over at Wadena," Hoskins said. "We have a great safety record at North Star and a lot of our guys came out of that program. We're very fortunate."

### Coming together

Behind support from the North Star board of directors, the process began when Hoskins and board President Steve Arnesen approached MSCTC about forming a partnership. After several meetings and careful consideration, the parties agreed to form a satellite school in Baudette.

"The board gave Dan and me permission to approach Wadena and



start the process, at least the dialogue," said Arnesen. "Amazingly, once the dialogue got started, it was almost like a runaway freight train. We think it's going to be a beautiful fit for Lake of the Woods County."

With an agreement in place, the search began for necessary funding.

The Lake of the Woods County Commission unanimously approved a \$360,000 donation, with another \$50,000 pledged from the Lake of the Woods Industrial Development Corporation. The North Star board donated the land next to its headquarters and the city has made several contributions. The county has also filed for a USDA Rural Development grant.

"The whole Lake of the Woods and Baudette communities need a big thank you," Hoskins said. "All I had was the idea. It takes a lot of cultivation."

Arnesen knows just how difficult it can be to enroll in the line worker school. His son, Chris, was on a waiting list for two years before being



From left at the July 15 groundbreaking, Ed Arnesen, chair of the Lake of the Woods County board of directors; Ann Valentine, president of Minnesota State Community and Technical College; Steve Arnesen, North Star Electric board president; Dan Skogen, state Sen. from District 10; Howard Mord, Lake of the Woods County Industrial Development Cooperation chair; and Rick Rone, mayor of Baudette.

accepted into the program this year. He will attend school on the Wadena campus this fall.

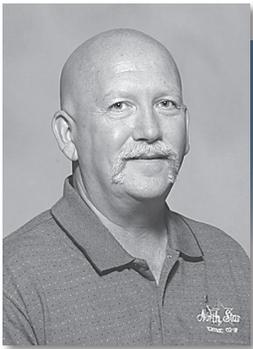
"That's kind of what got the whole idea started with Dan and me," Steve Arnesen said of the talk of a line worker school in Baudette. "It's an excellent program, an excellent career opportunity for young kids."

Hoskins also sees a bright future for the school in Baudette. He hopes the program will expand to provide a two-year associate degree and as many as 60 students.

As a former line worker himself, Hoskins has no problem generating enthusiasm for the school.

"It's so rewarding to be an electrical line worker. It's the ultimate job," he said.

	Fastening signs, posters and other objects to utility poles can create hazards for line workers. Sharp objects like nails, tacks, staples and barbed wire all present imminent dangers for co-op line crews who climb poles all hours of the day and night and in all the worst of conditions.
	If a line worker's hooks cut out while he is climbing, his injuries could be much more severe if an arm or leg catches a nail or other object tacked to the pole. Line workers' hooks can cut out due to contact with any foreign object on the pole. Sharp objects not only compound a fall, but can also puncture rubber gloves and other safety equipment, making line workers vulnerable to electrocution. Also, when line workers have to remove objects from poles in order to climb during an outage, this makes power restoration that much longer.
	Please think of the safety of the line crews and refrain from attaching signs or other objects to the co-op's poles.



**Dan Hoskins**  
General Manager

# Manager's Report

Congratulations are in order for all of you who have taken the step and let North Star

Electric Cooperative round up your bill. These cents that you donate each month have gone to some remarkable projects, and without your assistance some of those projects would have died and not happened.

The Operation Round Up Trust Board, led by President Peter Granger, is made up of a person from each director's district. Those folks do a great job in reviewing the applications and distributing the money. Although they cannot fill everyone's request, they do their best to fulfill each request based on need, in accordance with the qualifications and the bylaws of the Round Up organization.

With that being said, the trust board met July 12 and was able to distribute \$10,010! This is amazing and is because of all of you who are willing to help with a small amount of change each month. What is more amazing is since our Round Up program started in January 2007, the North Star Trust Board has been able to distribute \$69,429.77! Woohoooo!!

Congratulations to all of you and thank you!

Now, let's shift gears. Isn't it amazing how a little bit of something, like your change, can go a long way? Another little thing, for instance, that goes a long way is electricity. That little electron, when excited, really gets things rockin'. You can do just about anything you want and that little electron with his gang of friends just keeps on coming.

How about a 42-inch flat screen LCD TV? Now that provides enjoyment to a lot of folks. If you enjoy six hours of it per day, watching "The Price Is Right," soaps, news, or whatever, 30 days per month, that approximate cost to you for the month would be \$3.04. Entertainment for a month, and only \$3.04! Or maybe you are not into TV, and you'd like to search the Web on your computer for those six hours a day for a month. Your approximate cost would be...drum roll please, \$2.16...tada!

Let's say you enjoy a good old cup of java in the mornings. I know some folks need to get kick started in the mornings and coffee does the trick. Well, if you make coffee for one hour per day for one month, you can enjoy that coffee for an approximate cost of \$2.16 for the whole month. How about caramel rolls in the

microwave every morning to go with that coffee? That's about \$1.72 per month if you use that microwave a half hour per day. (It might add a pound or two, but think of the delicious enjoyment!)

Have I convinced you yet? Well, look at that clock radio sitting by the bed that runs 24/7. It keeps track of time for you, gives you an alarm when needed and possibly radio tunes when desired. That little dude runs for about \$.25 per month; \$.25 for all that work! Speaking of work, after a long day you'd like to enjoy that cold refreshing beverage, of your choice obviously, which is in that old fridge that we keep in the garage. If that appliance is a 1986 or newer model (and a lot of them are), it only costs you about \$5.76 per month to cool your favorite drink.

So, there you have it; that little change that you donate each month and allow the North Star Community Trust Board to give to needy projects is working wonders (363-33-004-01, William S. Sindelir). Couple that with the low cost that you pay each month for that gang of excited electrons to come into your home and do all that work for your enjoyment! It just doesn't get any better.

God Bless You and Our Troops,  
Dan

## Cold weather disconnects and the law

*The cold weather law does not totally forbid winter cutoffs. If you receive a disconnection notice this winter, you must act promptly.*

An electric cooperative must not disconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between Oct. 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit when the following conditions are met:

(1) the customer has declared inability to pay on forms provided by the utility. For the purposes of this clause, a customer who is receiving energy assis-

tance is deemed to have demonstrated an inability to pay;

(2) the household income of the customer is less than 50 percent of the state median income. All income documentation must be returned along with your Inability To Pay form unless you have verified income eligibility with an energy assistance provider in clause (3);

(3) verification of income may be conducted by the local energy assistance

provider or the utility, unless the customer is automatically eligible for protection against disconnection as a recipient of any form of public assistance, including energy assistance that uses income eligibility in any amount at or below the income eligibility in clause (2);

(4) a customer whose account is current for the billing period immediately prior to Oct. 15 or who, at any time, enters into a payment schedule that considers the financial resources of the household is reasonably current with payments under the schedule; and

(5) the customer receives referrals to energy assistance programs, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

*continued on page 8*

# Operation Round Up

## helps local programs

The North Star Electric Cooperative Community Trust Board met July 12, 2010, to review the 19 applications, which they received requesting funding for various programs. The total amount requested was about \$20,000. The board had about \$10,000 to work with, so it was not an easy task selecting which groups would get funding and what amount they would receive.

Many local programs and organizations benefit from Operation Round Up, a voluntary member-driven fundraising program of North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc., that is designed to provide financial assistance for worthwhile projects and charities in the area. Donations are given to organizations to help make the area a more pleasant and safe place to live.

All funds for Operation Round Up are contributed by the member-owners of North Star Electric and the



Front row left to right: Jim Jewell, Roosevelt American Legion; Tonja Reed, Crisis Resource Center; Gayle Wicklund, LSS Senior Nutrition Program; Joan Heinrich, Lake of the Woods Food Shelf; Patty Davidson, LakeWood Nursing Service; Nancy Jewell, Williams Senior Citizen; Roger Huerd, Williams Fire Department. Second row left to right: Peter Granger, North Star Electric Community Trust Board; Julie Berggren, Little Brother/Little Sister Program; Joanna Pearson, Kids-N-Us Program; Sonya Larson, Williams Alumni Committee; Anne Carradice and Lisa Beil, Lake of the Woods Safety Camp.

For example, if a bill is \$76.47, the computer will round up the bill to \$77. The additional 53 cents will be placed in the trust and distributed to local charitable and community-based programs.

About 80 percent of North Star's members have chosen to participate in Operation Round Up and it is expected that contributions will be about \$18,700 each year. That money goes right back into our community.

The average annual contribution from a member is about \$6. The most that could be contributed in a year by a member is \$11.88 (12 months x 99 cents).

If a member of North Star Electric or a nonmember of the cooperative would like to make an additional contribution, please give our office a call.



Front row from left to right: Mike Holden, Int'l Falls Recreation Commission; Julie Lepisto, Big Falls Lions Club; Sandy Jo Kennedy, North Star Electric Community Trust Board; Dan Benedix, Int'l Falls Recreation Commission. Back row from left to right: Peter Granger, North Star Electric Community Trust Board; Tom Donahue, Littlefork Ambulance Service; Irene Hauner, Falls Hunger Coalition; Beverly Pelland, Moose Creek Quilters; Wade Sutton, Indus School.

money is put into a trust fund that is separate from electric accounts. The trust is administered by its own board of directors comprised of people from across the area.

Operation Round Up directors are appointed by North Star's board members and must be members of the cooperative. The cooperative's general manager is a non-voting member of the board.

Organizations from the area may apply for a donation from the Operation Round Up Trust. The applicant must be charitable in nature and be working to meet a need in our area. The Operation Round Up Board meets twice a year and decides if an application meets the guidelines of the trust and if funds are available.

If a member chooses to be part of Operation Round Up, their bill is "rounded up" to the next highest dollar.



### At the July meeting \$10,010 in Operation Round Up funds were distributed to various qualifying programs and organizations throughout the area including:

- Lake of the Woods Food Shelf - *Food stocking*
- Falls Hunger Coalition - *Food stocking*
- LSS Senior Program - *Senior meals*
- Williams Senior meals - *Senior meals*
- Big Falls Fire/EMT Department - *White board*
- Big Falls Lions Club - *Big Falls Walking Trails*
- Littlefork Ambulance Service - *Defibrillator/monitor*
- Williams Fire Department - *Pulse oximeter/CO detection meters*
- Williams Alumni Committee - *City park shelter repair*
- LakeWood Nursing Service - *Tobacco free intervention/ kindergarten*
- Lake of the Woods Safety Camp - *Summer safety camp*
- Little Brother/Little Sister - *Activities*
- Indus School - *Capital visit*
- Kids-N-Us - *Summer camp*
- Crisis Resources Center - *Cherish the Child and build a bear*
- Roosevelt American Legion - *New furnace*
- Int'l Falls Recreation Commission - *Wrestling mats*
- Moose Creek Quilters - *Warm the body to warm the heart*



# STAFF REPORT

**Ann Ellis, Manager of Finance and Administration**

## *Mountains in northwest Minnesota?*

**I**remember when retired manager Harry Carls first brought his family to Baudette from Pennsylvania 20 years ago. He had warned his kids it was flat, but they had no idea that any mass of land could go on and on and on without any elevation fluctuation. But that has changed! As I look out my office window, I see a “mountain” forming. Lake of the Woods County is busy stockpiling fill for the new line workers training facility that Minnesota State Community and Technical College’s Wadena Program will operate. This is a true example of

how a community can band together to move in the right direction (666-19-004-02, Bob Barnes). With more than 30 new students about to descend on Baudette, they will provide a welcome shot of adrenaline to the local economy, and we all rejoice.

Just days after groundbreaking for the training facility, I heard a disturbing rumor of the closing of our local Ben Franklin store. As I visited with another main street retailer about it, she reiterated that the last 10 years of retailing has been the worst in her career. Local businesses are struggling. Local residents are struggling. That is why innovative projects like the collaboration with MSCTC are critical.

North Star Electric Cooperative is a Touchstone Energy Partner. The Touchstone Energy core values are

Integrity, Accountability, Innovation and Commitment to Community. Manager Dan Hoskins displayed these to bring the tech school idea to fruition, and he added an extra dose of persistence for good measure. We do our best at North Star to live up to these values every day for our members, our owners. We are here to help, and we appreciate your years of support as we celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> year of providing safe and reliable electricity to an area that no other utility would.

In closing, I would like to congratulate all of you out there who have helped strengthen our communities by cooperating with others. We’re all in this together...

Ann

### Win \$100

From time to time we show our appreciation to our members who help us be more efficient and are using the ACH payment option, which is the direct payment of their electric bill from their bank account on the due date every month. We will draw a random winner from our current ACH users on Aug. 17, so if you’ve been thinking about taking advantage of the convenience, guaranteed on-time payments and postage-saving automatic payment method, you have time to get signed up before the drawing for the \$100 energy credit.

We can mail the form to you, or it is on our website ([www.northstarelectric.coop](http://www.northstarelectric.coop)) under the forms link. Almost a third of our monthly billed members use ACH. The time saved by not having to manually process check payments, in addition to the time saved with the AMR (automatic meter readings), has allowed us to replace three retirees with two employees. Thank you for considering to sign up for direct payment.

## Visit us at the county fairs

Lake of the Woods County Fair  
Baudette, Aug. 26-29

Northern Minnesota District Fair  
Littlefork, Sept. 3-6

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Why is the cost of power going up when there is a surplus of electricity on the market?**

Electricity travels at the speed of light, so when you flip your switch in Minnesota, the energy to light that bulb was produced in North Dakota less than a second before. This emphasizes the point that electricity must be created at the same time as when the members demand it. It is common that members’ demand for electricity does not match the output of the generating source. Likewise, the less expensive surplus power on the market often does not coincide with when it is wanted. Our electricity comes mainly from coal, wind and hydro. Minnkota can also purchase market power when their resources are maxed out. Even then, there are times when market prices are too expensive, and off-peak loads are controlled to get us through the peaks.

### **How can I reduce the energy I use?**

Check out [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com) for many ideas. Seal drafts, turn off lights when you leave the room, lower the temperature on your water heater, replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents (CFLs), unplug phantom loads when not in use, use the power save setting on your computer. Find out more at [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com).

# Look up for power lines and stay safe

## Safe Electricity urges caution and awareness

Getting back to school is a busy time of year for everyone. When your mind is on other things, it's easy to overlook basic safety concerns. Things we see every day can almost fade from view. In fact, recent studies have found that people's minds likely ignore power lines because they have seen them so often they don't even notice them anymore. But failure to notice high-voltage power lines can be a deadly oversight. As part of the 2010 "Teach Learn Care TLC" campaign, Safe Electricity wants to raise awareness about the dangers and precautions to take around power lines.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, hundreds of consumer deaths occur each year from direct or indirect contact with power lines. Electrocutation is also the second leading cause of death for utility and construction workers according to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. With so many people distracted at this time of year, Safe Electricity wants to emphasize the importance of electrical safety.

"Often when we undertake outdoor activities, we don't even think about power lines," Molly Hall, executive director of Safe Electricity said. "Taking a few moments to become aware of your surroundings is a critical step to keeping yourself and your loved ones safe."

Safe Electricity encourages everyone to follow these guidelines as they prepare to work outdoors this year:

- Look up and around you. Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long tools like ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles. Lower your long equipment when you are moving it. Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.
- Be careful when working on or around your roof, installing rooftop antennas and satellite dishes, doing roof repair work or cleaning gutters. Never go up on the roof in windy or bad weather.
- Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines.
- Never trim trees near power lines – leave that to the professionals. Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines. Contact a professional maintenance contractor.
- Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines aren't touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.
- If your projects include digging, like

building a deck or planting a tree, call your local underground utility locator before you begin. Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. This service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted, and can help you avoid serious injury.

Another instance where people often come in contact with power lines is through vehicle crashes. In accidents that bring down power lines, our instincts tell us to flee danger. However, it's almost always best to stay in your vehicle and wait for help. It is especially important to educate inexperienced teenage drivers about power line safety who might be driving themselves to and from school and other activities.

Four Indiana teenagers found themselves in this dangerous situation last February. After colliding with a power pole, a power line fell on the vehicle they were traveling in. Fortunately, some of them had just attended a power line safety demonstration at their high school.

Lee Whittaker, one of the students involved in the crash, credits their survival to timely electrical safety education. "I made sure everyone else was okay and made sure I was okay. I told them not to get out," Whittaker said. "That was the main thing he had repeated during the program, (you should) not get out of a vehicle if you're in an accident involving power lines."

If you must get out because of fire or another danger, jump clear of the vehicle without touching it and the ground at the same time. Then hop with feet together – don't run or stride. Electricity spreads out through the ground in ripples, like a stone dropped in water. The voltage is highest in the ring closest to the vehicle and decreases with distance. Hop with feet together so that one foot won't be in a higher voltage zone than another, which could make you a conductor for electricity!

If you come upon, or witness an accident involving toppled power poles and lines, don't leave your vehicle to approach the accident scene. "Often our inclination is to step in and help those in danger and offer assistance to the injured," Hall said. "However, in accidents involving power poles, the best thing you can do is call for help. Wait for trained assistance to arrive, or you could become an additional victim in need of rescue."

For more information, visit: [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).



## 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 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
International Falls, MN 56649  
283-7000

### Kootasca Community Action, Inc.

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

### Kootasca Community Action, Inc.

1213 SE 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave.  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744-3984  
800-422-0312

### Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

702 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. S.  
Virginia, MN 55792-2797  
800-662-5711

## Cold weather disconnects *(continued from page 4)*

### The cold weather law provides you with these options

The RIGHT to declare your inability to pay. If you do so and if your household income is less than 50 percent of the state median income, the service affecting your primary heat source cannot be disconnected for nonpayment of your bill. However, we have the right to accept or reject your request based on information supplied or other supporting documentation.

The RESPONSIBILITY, if you choose to declare inability to pay. You must complete an “Inability to Pay” form and return it to us within fifteen (15) days of the notice to disconnect. You must contact us immediately to arrange a payment plan.

The RIGHT to a mutually agreeable payment schedule with us. The schedule will cover your existing arrears plus the estimated usage during the payment schedule period.

The RIGHT not to be involuntarily disconnected on a Friday or on a day before a holiday, or until at least twenty (20) days after the postmark on the notice to disconnect or until fifteen (15) days after the notice and information has been personally

delivered.

The RIGHT not to be disconnected until the utility investigates whether the residential unit is actually occupied when a customer does not respond to a disconnection notice. If the unit is found to be occupied, the utility must immediately inform the occupant of the provisions of this section. If the unit is unoccupied, the

### Local energy assistance providers

Lake of the Woods County	218-634-2642
Koochiching County	218-283-7000
Northwest Community Action	800-568-5329
Kootasca Community Action	800-422-0312
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity	800-662-5711

utility must give seven days’ written notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy assistance provider before making a disconnection.

The RIGHT to receive budget counseling from your local energy assistance provider or another organization of your choice.

The RIGHT to appeal the disconnection of service to the North Star Electric Cooperative board of directors. If you choose to appeal, you must deliver or mail

a personal letter stating your situation and issues in dispute. Your letter must be in our hands before the date of disconnection. You will be notified when the board of directors will review your appeal and you may be present at the review. No disconnection of service will take place during the appeal process.

**If you do not meet all the conditions of the cold weather law as outlined on this notice, you do not qualify for winter shutoff protection.**

However, you still can continue to receive electric service if you call us to set up a mutually acceptable payment arrangement. Call North Star Electric at 218-278-6658 or 888-258-2008, BEFORE the due date on your disconnection notice.

**If you meet all the conditions of the cold weather law, can’t pay your electric bill, and need cold weather protection from utility shutoff, call North Star Electric to have an Inability to Pay form sent to you. Complete the form and return it to North Star Electric Cooperative immediately along with your income documentation.**

## Citi Lites now marking consumer side power lines when necessary through Gopher State One Call

Homeowners need to remember that every digging job first requires a call to 811 at least two business days before digging to get utility lines marked – even small projects like planting trees and shrubs.

The depth of utility lines varies and there may be multiple utility lines in a common area. Digging without calling can disrupt service, harm you and those around you and potentially result in fines and repair costs. Calling 811 before every digging job gets underground utility power lines marked for free, up to your main meter.

Underground power lines from the main meter inward, however, are the responsibility of the member (121-13-002-01, Jake Janzen). In North Star’s service territory, private lines beyond North Star’s main meter (if the homeowner has them) are marked by Citi Lites for a fee. To contact Citi Lites, please call 218-568-4744. Their phone number is also listed on the locating utility flag marking North Star’s underground lines.

Remember, before any digging project, large or small, you must call 811 to have utility lines marked. When you call 811, you’ll be routed to the local Gopher State One Call center, where they will lead you step by step through the process and answer questions.



**Know what’s below.  
Call before you dig.**