

Baudette, Minnesota

Volume 53 Number 11, November 2008

North Star Electric board president Steve Arnesen welcomes the members to the 2008 annual meeting.

North Star members listen to a presentation during the annual meeting.



213 members registered at this year's meeting and about \$425,000 in capital

credits were returned to the members as a credit on their September electric bill.



Before the meeting more than 500 members enjoyed an excellent meatball dinner prepared by the Lake of the Woods School kitchen crew and served by members of the National Honor Society.

- \$500 Carol Wicklund/Big Falls
- \$250 Melferd Dyrstad/Int'l Falls
- \$100 Roger Erickson/Williams
- \$100 Marilyn Erickson-Homespun Country/Williams
- \$100 Ray Johnson/Roosevelt
- \$100 Ron Epley/Int'l Falls
- \$100 Truman Lindvall/Littlefork
- \$100 Betty Frohreich/Baudette

- \$100 Roger Johnson/Int'l Falls
- \$100 Charles Crego/Orr

prize winners

- \$100 David Novak/Baudette
- \$100 David Cassi/Williams
- \$ 50 Clifford Treat/Big Falls
- \$ 50 Judy Senkyr/Williams
- \$ 50 Liz Lockner/Baudette
- \$ 50 Willis Scholler/Int'l Falls
- \$ 50 Gerald Streiff/Kabetogama

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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.

Gopher State One Call



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

Highlights from the **BOARDROOM**

These are the highlights from the Board of Directors meeting held on Oct. 1, 2008. The board acted upon usual, routine business, voted to approve the Cost of Service Study, the Identity Theft Prevention Program policy and to support an effort to negotiate language with the State's municipals for a statute to end the constant and inconsistent legal battles when municipals take over cooperative service territory. Board members reported on meetings attended, including the Minnkota Power Cooperative and Square Butte board meetings.

Reports from staff included the financial report, unadvanced loan funds, capital credit retirements, audit, financial forecast, roll out of the e-bill service, AMR (automated meter reading) issues, load control, off-peak installations, CIP (conservation improvement program), Operation Round Up, distributed generation, Marathon water heater sales, annual meeting, work plan projects, underground cable faults on the Norris Camp line, equipment, pole testing, outages, proposed rates, current state of the plan to construct the neutrino capturing facility, the Rural Economic Development Loan/Grant program and the upcoming employee meeting, which will be devoted to acknowledging the achievement of reaching 250,000 hours worked without a lost-time incident.

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 you would like placed on the agenda, please contact Manager Dan Hoskins at least one week in advance to be included on the agenda.

NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE POLITICAL LEADERS

Federal legislators

Senator Norm Coleman 320 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510 www.coleman.senate.gov 202-224-5641 1-800-642-6041 (Minnesota office) Fax: 202-224-1152

Senator Amy Klobuchar

302 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510 www.klobuchar.senate.gov 202-224-3244 1-888-224-9043 (Minnesota office) Fax: 202-228-2186

Congressman James Oberstar

2365 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515 www.jamesoberstar.house.gov 202-225-6211 Fax: 202-225-0699

Congressman Collin Peterson

2211 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515 www.collinpeterson.house.gov 202-225-2165 Fax: 202-225-1593

State of Minnesota legislators

Senator Tom Bakk

75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Capitol Building, Room 226 St. Paul, MN 55155-1606 651-296-8881 sen.tom.bakk@senate.mn

Senator Tom Saxhaug

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Senator LeRoy Stumpf

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Representative Dave Olin

593 State Office Building 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. St. Paul, MN 55155 651-296-9635 rep.dave.olin@house.mn

Representative Tom Rukavina

477 State Office Building 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. St. Paul, MN 55155 651-296-0170 888-682-3205 rep.tom.rukavina@house.mn



Get involved in the energy debate.

I would like North Star Electric to e-mail my elected officials and ask them these three questions:

- What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?
- What are you doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions-free electric plants an affordable reality?
- ?

Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?

Name
Address
City/State/Zip
Account number

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

 7:00 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.)

Space heaters can dramatically increase your electric bill

Members who plug in an electric space heater to keep warm in one room for just an hour a day should not notice a big increase in their electric bill. A space heater plugged in for one hour a day would use 45 kWh per month or about \$3.47 in electricity.

On the other hand, put that same space heater out in the well house or shed and let it run 24 hours a day for the month; you would be billed for 1,080 kWh or \$83.16 in energy. beds, dog water bowls, heated bird baths, etc., will consume energy when used in cold weather. However, most of these appliances have much smaller wattages of 12 to 250 watts each. Check individual appliance wattages to determine energy use. For more information call North Star Electric and ask for the member service department.

Other electric heating appliances



operate the same way. A stock tank heater for cattle or horses will run much of the time when it is located out in the cold. A 1,000 watt heater will cost you 7.7

cents per hour to operate. This sounds low but if it did not shut off, it would use 720 kWh or \$55.44 per month to operate. If you have multiple tank heaters in use, you'll have to multiply that amount by the number of tank heaters.

Other appliances, like warm doggy's

Listen to what your mother told you; if it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't true

You have probably heard radio ads or have seen ads in newspapers and magazines that claim they can cut your heating bill by up to 50 percent by just buying their electric space heater. With the high price of heating in northern Minnesota, who wouldn't like to do that; I know I would, but the key wording in these ads is up to. There is a lot of difference between 50 percent and up to 50 percent. The ad that I read explaining the way you could do this was to turn the heat down in your house to as low as 50 degrees and move the space heater into the room which was occupied. The savings are not in the heater; it is the fact that you turned the heat in your house down to 50 degrees. They claim the space heater will not reduce humidity or oxygen, which is true, but it is also true that the space heater you buy at the local hardware store doesn't either. There are 3,413 Btus for each kilowatt-hour, and the only way to get more is with heat pump technology. I haven't seen nor heard of anything like that with portable electric heaters. In northern Minnesota, during the winter, one plug-in space heater is not going to heat a 1,000 square foot home. My advice is that if you have a cold spot in your house and \$500 burning a hole in your pocket, go to your local hardware store, buy a space heater for \$50, and use the other \$450 to reinsulate your home or give it to your favorite charity.

The heating season is here

Additional generation to benefit off-peak customers

Although a number of variables affect off-peak control hours, increased electric demand on the Minnkota Power Cooperative generation and transmission system during the 2008-2009 heating season will be offset by the addition of new generating resources.

That's good news for the more than 50,000 off-peak customers in the Minnkota/Northern Municipal Power Agency (NMPA) Joint System who receive electric service from an associated cooperative or municipal in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota.

Dual heat is a simple concept. Participants in the load management program receive substantially reduced electric rates for their primary electric heating source. In exchange, they maintain an automatic and reliable backup heating system capable of carrying them through control times.

These dual heating systems allow Minnkota to interrupt the flow of electricity during peak demand times to better manage energy supply and demand. Load management activities are initiated from the Control Center in Grand Forks, N.D.

More resources

The additional generation within the Minnkota system will come from:

• Purchasing energy from another 40.5 megawatts (MW) of capacity from the

Langdon Wind Energy Center south of Langdon, N.D.;

- Purchasing energy produced by the new 99 MW Ashtabula Wind Energy Center north of Valley City, N.D., when it is commissioned later this year; and
- Exercising the last of four incremental options to increase Minnkota's allocation (by another 5 percent) of the power produced by Young 2 beginning Jan. 1, 2009. That final increment will add another 22 MW of capacity, bringing Minnkota's share to 50 percent of Young 2 generation.

Positive offset

"These additional resources should also reduce the number of hours of load control," said Todd Sailer, Minnkota energy supply manager. "We are actually at a point where the expanded resources should be a positive offset to the amount of load management that may be needed."

While Sailer isn't projecting an actual number of load control hours this winter season, he is predicting that the number of hours should be less than last year. This is in spite of an anticipated 2.5 percent increase in total system load.

The decision to control off-peak loads is an economic one. The cost of wholesale power on the open market is the primary driver. The price of natural gas, which fuels many of the region's peaking plants, has a huge bearing on the cost of wholesale power. An escalated price of natural gas translates into higher wholesale electricity costs.

"The decision on whether to purchase energy from the market or to control offpeak loads is based on the current market price, along with season-to-date energy purchases and control hours," said Al Tschepen, vice president of Planning and System Operations.

Entire system benefits

The load management program benefits all customers in the Minnkota/ NMPA Joint System. By controlling demand for a short time during high-use periods, affordable rates for all customers are maintained and the construction of new baseload generation just to cover the peak load periods is avoided.

Sailer noted that using a blend of primary off-peak electric heat with backup provided by propane, natural gas or fuel oil is significantly less expensive than heating with fossil fuels alone.

"Off-peak electric heating," he explained, "is definitely the most economical heating choice. And with a good backup heating system properly installed and maintained, off-peak customers shouldn't notice any difference in comfort level when the load control system is called on to operate."

Saving energy at home



Tips are just a click away

Electric customers have the power to control their energy costs and become more energy efficient. A new Web site, www. touchstoneenergysavers. com, is a great starting point to help homeowners get on their way toward better energy management.

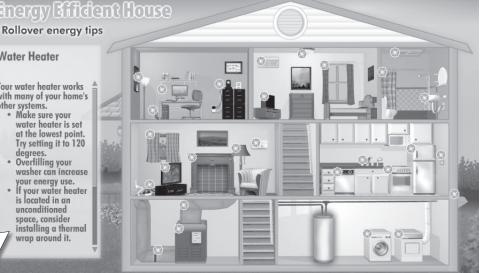
The Web site features useful tools, valuable tips and resources designed to create greater home comfort and promote energy efficiency.

"Touchstone Energy[®] cooperatives have always placed a high priority on promoting energy efficiency to their members," said Lisa Pickard, Minnkota Power *Cooperative communications/* member services specialist. "That's why Touchstone Energy Savers was created."

At right is a sampling of the topics featured on the site.

Water Heater

- Your water heater works with many of your home's
- other systems. Make sure your water heater is set at the lowest point. Try setting it to 120
- degrees. Overfilling your washer can increase our energy use. your water heater is located in an unconditioned space, consider installing a thermal
- wrap around it.



Energy savings home tour

Take the Touchstone Energy home tour to find ways to save energy. After completing the tour, download a copy of Touchstone Energy's popular "Home Energy Savings Guide" for more energy efficiency tips and resources.

Light bulb energy saver

Switching from regular incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) can help make a home more energy efficient and save money. Find out how much can be saved by using the Touchstone Energy light bulb calculator.

Water heater saver

Learn the best type of water heater to own, and why.

Home energy saver audit

This robust online audit will help identify the best ways to manage and save energy at home. The resource quickly calculates home energy use based on a detailed description of a customer's home, its appliances and geographic location.

"Home Energy Savings Guide"

The guide offers valuable tips designed to create greater home comfort and improve performance. Learn how to save energy in all areas of the home. There is a list of additional resources located at the end of the booklet.

"Seal the Deal" video

One of the best and easiest ways for consumers to save on their energy bills is to make sure their home is properly sealed. Hidden cracks and improper insulation can amount to as much heat loss as having a window open all year-round. "Seal the Deal" is a short, do-it-yourself video that shows what can be done to seal small cracks and insulate the house to reduce monthly energy bills.

Heating and cooling energy savings

Consumers spend roughly 56 percent of their total home energy costs on heating and cooling. Taking steps to create heating and cooling systems that are more energy efficient can help reduce utility costs. Touchstone Energy has partnered with the North American Technician Excellence Association to provide tips for reducing costs associated with a home's heating and cooling systems.















A cooler 2008

Around the globe, temps appear to be the chilliest this century

ccording to a news article from the BBC News, environmental correspondent Richard Black reported that the world appears to be heading toward a cooler 2008, possibly the coolest around the globe this past century.

Data from the United Kingdom's Met Office shows that temperatures in the first half of the year have been more than 0.1 degrees Celsius cooler than any year since 2000. Scientists point out that the principal reason is La Nina, part of the natural cycle, which cools the globe.

^TThe big thing that's been happening this year is La Nina, which has lowered global temperatures somewhat," said John Kennedy, climate monitoring and research scientist at the Met Office's Hadley Centre. "La Nina has faded in the last couple of months and now we have neutral conditions in the Pacific."

Scientists at the World Meteorological Organization have also suggested that 2008 will turn out to be cooler than the last few years.

Impact on sea ice

La Nina cools waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean, but its effects are felt around the globe. It is one of a number of natural climatic cycles that can reinforce or counteract the recent warming trend.

Our offices will be closed **Thursday, Nov. 27,**

– and –

Friday, Nov. 28 in observance of Thanksgiving Earlier this year, one group of researchers suggested that another natural cycle, the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation, was likely to hold temperatures steady for about the next decade, before reversing direction and allowing renewed warming.

One of the starkest effects of climate change has been the rapid loss of summer Arctic sea ice, which has accelerated since the year 2000. (429-46-080-02 Thomas Duranseau) Earlier in the year, there were indications that 2008 could see even more ice lost than in the record-breaking melt of 2007.

Presently, the ice appears to be holding together better than a year ago, although scientists are wary as much of it was formed in a single winter. Two months ago, Canadian authorities declared that the Northwest Passage is "navigable," though acknowledging that some parts of it still contain floating ice.

La Nina explained

- La Nina translates from the Spanish as "The Child Girl."
- Refers to the extensive cooling of the central and eastern Pacific.
- Increased sea temperatures in the western Pacific mean the atmosphere has more energy, and frequency of heavy rain and thunderstorms is increased.
- Typically lasts up to 12 months and in general, less damaging than the stronger El Nino.

Alaskan glaciers grew this year, thanks to colder weather

For 200 years glacial shrinkage was recorded in Alaska, and then came the winter and summer of 2007-2008. Abnormally

large amounts of winter snow were followed by unusually chilly temperatures this past June, July and August.

"In mid-June, I was surprised to see snow still at sea level in Prince William Sound," said Bruce Molnia, a U.S. Geological Survey glaciologist. "On the Juneau Icefield, there was still 20 feet of new snow on the surface of the Taku Glacier in late July. (363-22-005-03 Gary Aery) At Bering Glacier, a landslide I am studying that is located at about 1,500 feet elevation did not become snow free until early August. In general, the weather this summer was the worst I have seen in at least 20 years."

Never before in the history of a research project dating back to 1946 has the Juneau Icefield witnessed the kind of snow buildup that came this year. It was similar on a lot of other glaciers, too.

"It's been a long time on most glaciers where they've actually had positive mass balance," Molnia said, meaning the glaciers became thicker in the middle.

Staff Report

2008 is winding down

Our snowbirds are headed south and thoughts are focusing on next year's budget. As you probably noticed in our annual report, the margins (profits) for 2007 were pretty much non-existent, but 2008 is looking to be a much better performing year.

Rates

Looking forward to 2009 brings concern about the rates. Our wholesale power rate is projected to increase 13 percent in March. Our low-cost, coalfired electricity is being impacted by legislative and environmental mandates. You all know what this means to your retail rates. A hit like this cannot be absorbed. The board of directors has recently approved a cost of service study prepared by Power System Engineering. This will help to equitably apply the upcoming rate adjustment to the components of each rate class.

Doing more with less

In the meantime, we continue to look for ways to do a better job for less. We have reduced staffing after a couple of retirements and have implemented some new technologies to make us more efficient.

AMR

One of those technologies is our AMR system (automated meter reading). Not only does it save you the trip through the snowbank to read your meter, but it also saves us the manual office work of handling these readings. This system is working well for the most part. A fraction of the meters has been identified by the manufacturer as possibly slowing down. They are paying to have a contractor replace these meters. As we tweak this system, we may call upon you to help, such as you visually reading the display, rather than us sending a truck and a line worker to do it. We appreciate your help in our cost-cutting efforts.

Paying your bill

Here's another way you can help us save money. Processing your payments

Ann Ellis Finance Manager

is becoming significantly more efficient as more than 1,000 (20 percent) of our monthly-billed residential members have signed up for ACH (automatic payment from their checking or savings account).

Access to your billing information

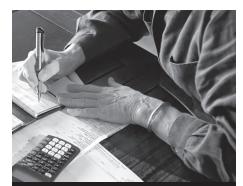
To complement the AMR and ACH options, we have implemented e-bill, a free service to the members. The minute that electric bills are calculated, e-bill sends an e-mail notification with the bill amount to those signed up. This link also provides members with a wealth of information about your past usage patterns and several years worth of billing and payment information. (241-09-009-05 Jerry Vanis) Almost a week later, your paper copy will show up, unless you decide to no longer receive a bill through the U.S. postal service. Access to all of this is free and is available to you 24/7.

So, if you have an e-mail address, even if you use it only occasionally, please consider sharing it with us so we can provide additional services to you. You can sign up for e-bill at **www. northstarelectric.coop**, or give us a call to set it up for you.

\$100 and \$200 Energy Credit Prizes

We are extending the drawing date to Dec. 8. This drawing is for members who are signed up for ACH (the \$200 drawing) or e-bill (the \$100 drawing). If you aren't already signed up for one or both, you might want to do it now.

Whew . . . that's a lot of info. Thank you for taking the time to read through it and for supporting your cooperative, the business that you own. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving, and remember that the most precious things in life aren't "things."



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

Snowmobilers Beware of hazards! Respect property rights!



As snowmobiling becomes more popular, the number of accidents are increasing. Very few accidents occur on Minnesota's trail system. Most accidents occur along roads and ditches. Obstacles encountered along roads and other cleared rights of way can be very dangerous, especially in low visibility conditions.

North Star Electric Cooperative and the other Minnkota Power Cooperative-associated systems have poles, guy wires, metal enclosures and pedestals installed on hundreds of miles of rights

of way. When snowmobiling, be aware of these obstacles. Guy wires need special attention as they can be difficult to see.

Some snowmobilers are mistaking the private property where electric transmission lines are located for snowmobile trails. North Star Electric and the other Minnkota-associated systems have been granted easements to build and maintain lines in these cleared areas, but the land still belongs to the landowner. Be sure to check with the landowners before snowmobiling on their property.

Enjoy snowmobiling in Minnesota, but keep safety in mind. Slow down, don't drink and stay alert for obstacles.

Operation Round Up

Applications are available to non-profit or communitybased organizations that demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the quality of life in our region. Application forms are available at both the Baudette and Littlefork offices, from Trust Board members or the North Star Web site:

OPERATION

www.northstarelectric.coop. Applications must be received by Dec. 1 to be considered by the Community Trust Board at the January meeting.



Statement of Ownership

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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.

