

Questions on load control?

Check it out on the Internet. Visit North Star's website: www.northstarelectric.coop.

Current Status | [Today's Log](#) | [Yesterday's Log](#) | [Archive](#) | [LM Plans](#)

Last Transmission: 09-Dec-2011 07:07:48

Current Status / Last Switching Cycle

Load Group	DO 9	DO 10	DO 11	DO 12	DO 13	DO 14	DO 15	DO 16	DO 17	DO 18	DO 19	DO 20	DO 21	DO 22	DO 23	DO 24
1.01	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
1.02	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
2.01	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF
2.02	ON	ON	ON	OFF	OFF	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	OFF	OFF	ON	ON	ON	OFF
2.03	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
2.04	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
3.01	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
3.06	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
3.07	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
3.09	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON
6.01	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON	ON

(Click Load Group for Last Switching Cycle)

Load Group Categories:

- 1 - Short-Term Loads (water heaters)
- 2 - Intermediate-Term Loads (storage heat)
- 3 - Long-Term Loads (dual heating furnaces, backup generators)
- 6 - Summer-Only Loads (irrigation, cycled air conditioning)

Want to follow load control activity in your area? Go to www.northstarelectric.coop and click on "Off peak control information." This Web page contains the current status, today's control log, yesterday's control log, archives, load control plans and the last switching cycle

for each load group and double order number. On this site you can check the most current information on load control as well as past load control. Your specific load group information is on the lower left hand corner of your electric bill. Please remember this is Minnkota's current estimate for controlling load. Control

plans can and do change several times each hour.

Illustrated above is what Minnkota's website looks like for the current state of the load management system. All of load group 2.01 is controlled and double order 12, 13, 19, 20 and 24 of load group 2.02 are also controlled.

In this issue:

Board highlights/Electric or propane?	2
Manager's report	3
Extremely cold temperatures/The value is electric	4
Managing the energy marketplace	5
Office notes/Best wishes to Carolyn Mastin	6
Too good to be true/AFCLs	7
Celebrate with savings LED rebate	8
Problems paying your bill/Co-op Connections Card	9
Happy holidays from all of us	10

GOPHER STATE ONE CALL



It's the **LAW**
**CALL BEFORE
YOU DIG**

Minnesota Statewide One Call
Notification Center
1-800-252-1166

*Merry
Christmas*
and
Happy New Year!

North Star offices will be closed Friday, Dec. 23,
and Monday, Dec. 26, for Christmas and
Monday, Jan. 2, for New Year's Day.

DECEMBER 2011

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OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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

General Manager. Dan Hoskins
Editor Wayne Haukaas

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

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

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

e-mail us at nsec@wiktel.com
Visit our website at
www.northstarelectric.coop

North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc. Mission Statement

*To improve the lives of our
member-owners and community
by responsibly providing electric
energy and other beneficial services
while maintaining the very highest
standards of performance.*

Members' corner

We added a section called 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' Nov. 2 meeting. In addition to routine business, the board voted to approve a limited amount of estate capital credits, to adopt a board resolution addressing the concern that the costly Regional Haze program the EPA is proposing will not produce results much more significant than the recently installed equipment, to select delegates and committee members for 2012, to set the 2012 Annual Meeting date as Oct. 5, and to move the December board meeting to Dec. 8.

Staff reports included the financial report, wholesale power rates, that

retail rates will not need adjusting if wholesale rates do not increase, consequences of energy theft and reaching more than 400,000 hours of work without a lost-time accident.

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.

Electric or propane: which is the best heating value

With the price of propane about 20 percent higher than last year, we are receiving several calls about which is cheaper: off-peak electric or propane. The answer this year is the same as last year: off-peak electric is still the best heating value. Of course, if you have a new, super-efficient propane furnace, the costs are closer, but off-peak electric is still cheaper even with a wind energy surcharge.

The efficiency of a propane furnace varies greatly depending on what type of propane furnace you have. The older style furnace with a standing pilot is only about 60 percent efficient, the mid-range furnace with electronic ignition is about 80 percent efficient and the newer super-efficient furnace is about 90 percent efficient. The efficiency of these furnaces has been tested under ideal lab conditions and generally can't be duplicated after they have been installed in the home. The new, super-efficient furnace that has been properly installed in a home does come

close to the furnaces that were tested in the lab.

So at what price would you need to buy propane to equal the price of off-peak electric? Once again it depends on what furnace you are using. Remember that you need to average the price of propane that you bought over the entire year, not just use the summer fill price and don't forget to include the tank rental fee. If you had a furnace with a standing pilot, the price per gallon would need to be \$1.03 per gallon, with a furnace with electronic ignition, the price would need to be \$1.37 per gallon and a super-efficient furnace, the price would need to be under \$1.55 per gallon. The average price of propane per gallon in the North Star Electric system in October was \$2.24, so you can see that off-peak electric heat is still the best heating value for your home or business. You are a member-owner of North Star Electric Cooperative so it only makes sense for you to buy from a company that you already own.

• • • • 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.)



Dan Hoskins
General Manager

Manager's Report

Tis the season to be jolly, fa-la-la-laa la-la-la-la. Sorry if I got to many fas or las in there, but it is much easier to sing than write. Anyway, it's getting close to that magical season

where we celebrate a wondrous birthday and enjoy family and friends with a cup of hot cider, or whatever you have on hand.

It is also the end of another year here at North Star Electric Cooperative and it was full of moments of highs and lows, so I would like to give you a quick rundown of this past year. We started this year on a very low note with the passing of board member LJ Anderson at the end of December. But a lot of times it takes a tragedy to create opportunity. This gave the North Star board of directors the opportunity to fulfill a bylaw that was created four years ago that says the board will go to seven districts when there is an opportunity. So, January was an opportunity month. Another opportunity in January came when the Minnkota Power Cooperative board of directors hired a new CEO by the name of Robert "Mac" McLennan. Both the board and Mac looked at this as an opportunity. Mac looked at it as an opportunity for a career move and the board of directors looked at it as an opening to bring in a CEO they felt would be able to head our ship through rough waters. January was also the month the monies collected by North Star, from our member-owners that are gracious enough to have their bill rounded up to help out local organizations, was distributed.

February came and went as an anticipation month. Why is that, you ask? Because we always anticipate in February; what is going to happen in the spring, we anticipate March because we know the weather is going to warm up, and this year we anticipated March because Minnkota had decided to have a very large wholesale power increase. We also had legislative visits to our Congress folks, our U.S. Senate folks, and then later that month we visited with our state legislators.

March is here and this we will call anxiety month. Although the weather was halfway nice, we still knew the wholesale rate increase was coming. We also got to take care of some needed line patrol by the crews and some spring and summer work load planning for our operations department. Plus, the rate increase started on March 20, which is a result of the emissions upgrade to Minnkota's power plants because of a Consent Decree that Minnkota signed with the EPA.

April was a beautiful month with the ice going out on the lake, the critters starting to come back, things starting to warm up and an operations meeting to get ready for the summer construction season. We had a successful REDLG (Rural Economic Development Loan & Grants) program grant for \$300,000 for the line school and we also cut over the largest

load on our system, the science lab known as the NOvA site.

May brought our construction season to a start and the crews hit the ground running. Also, our employee quarterly safety committee meeting was held as well as our open house at each office with a great turnout of member-owners, as well as an informational meeting at Lake of the Woods High School from McLennan on the rising Minnkota wholesale rates and the future of our power resources. A RUS representative was here to assist us with our loan application for our new four-year work plan. The new line workers school graduated its first class on May 7 where 28 students started and 28 students graduated. Whew! Oh, by the way, we hired three of them for the summer to assist our crews with the construction season, Rick Kosloski, Chad Johnson and Matt Oeffling.

Then June came in and the crews were busy with summer line work, as usual, and taking care of outages from summer weather. We also had our energy tour, which takes a bus load of member-owners to Minnkota Power Cooperative to view the diesel generators, Ashtabula Wind Energy Center, Milton R. Young Station, open pit mines and Garrison Dam. A great time was had by all and the group was led by Wayne Haukaas, member service manager. Call Wayne if you would be interested in going on this tour; it is a fantastic three-day trip.

July came and the weather started to heat up and Mother Nature began to make those loud booming sounds and our crews keep a watchful eye out on the sky. We had a Strategic Planning Session for the management staff and the board of directors, which hopefully gave us all some foresight on what to look forward to and possibilities of a structured plan that will benefit the cooperative and our member-owners (140-21-025-03, Gladys Meade). Also, Operation Round Up had its six-month distribution meeting and things went well.

August was hot and by some hotter than the last few years. Maybe that global wa..... nevermind. The crews were busy still chasing the weather outages, but more important, doing some maintenance and rebuilding a few areas of the system. We did get our four-year work plan RUS loan approved. This money, more than \$6 million, assists North Star in our maintenance and construction for four years based on our projected work plan.

September means things start shaping up for fall and believe it or not the crews, although they were moving hard and fast, still had the end of our construction season in the back of their mind so they knew things had to get done. We also had our safety inspection, which is actually called Rural Electric Safety Accreditation Program. We passed that inspection, performed by outside sources, with flying colors thanks to all

continued on page 4

Manager's Report

continued from page 3

the employees and a big thank you to Steve Ellis, our safety coordinator. (He's also our District Operations Supervisor in Baudette.) The EPA filed a FIP (Federal Implementation Plan) against the state of North Dakota for clearer air, which will cost us more money on our rates if it gets its way. (And I said I wasn't going to say anything about that this time, sorry.) A 60-day comment period started. One of our highlights was the return of \$616,258 in capital credits to our members!

In October things started to slow down. The crews caught up on a number of projects, so they started to throttle down. Our annual meeting was Oct. 7 in Littlefork and a great crowd turned out to hear how financially sound your cooperative is and also got not one, but two great reports. One from Luther Kvernén, vice president of generation at Minnkota Power Cooperative, and one from Mark Glaess, general manager of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association.

November came to a close and the river glazed over with ice, but the weather warmed up so soft-water fishing was available if you wanted to launch your boat. We also have slowed down enough in the construction department that our three summer helpers were gone, but the good news is that Chad got a job with the line school here in Baudette, Matt got a job in western North Dakota at a cooperative out in the

middle of the oil boom and Rick moved his family to the Brainerd area and he is working for an electrical contractor. Nov. 21 was the last day of comments to the EPA, but I can say that we had overwhelming support from our local governments and you, the people, against these EPA actions.

December is here and by the time you read this, I would guess that you have either questioned your power bill or at least talked about it with someone. The winter months usually bring higher power bills on average and with the large wholesale rate increase Minnkota gave us in March, most of us will really notice it this month. Also, I would guess that you have or will have finished your Christmas shopping when you get this. One last thing: you can rest assured that your cooperative is in good hands, from the board of directors to the employees. We are all watching out for your best interests and the interests of our cooperative.

In closing, I would like to personally thank all of our employees here at North Star Electric Cooperative and our board of directors for all their dedication and hard work throughout this past year and to you, our member-owners, for your understanding with us, patience with us and your choice in using the greatest product in the world, electricity.

Have a blessed Merry Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year.

God bless you and our troops, Dan

EXTREMELY COLD TEMPERATURES WILL AFFECT THE OPERATION OF YOUR RENTED SECURITY LIGHT



If you notice a problem with your security light this winter, such as intermittent failure or it remains dimmer than normal, you're not alone. Severe cold weather, specifically -10 degrees or colder, may seriously affect the operation of security lights.

The problem involves the formation of a gas in the bulb, which can be hampered by the cold. Usually, when the weather warms up, the lights will return to normal operation and will not have to be replaced.

If your security light is owned by North Star, we would appreciate it if you could bear with us during the coldest spells. If the light does not return to normal operation when the weather warms up, please notify our office and we will repair it for you (Baudette 634-2202, Littlefork 278-6658).

The value is electric!

One tank of gas for your car
20 gallons at \$3.37/gallon = **\$67.40**

More than 19 days of electricity
for your entire home = **\$67.40***

*Based on North Star Electric average residential usage of 875 kWh per month at the residential rate of \$.113/kWh + temporary wind energy surcharge of \$.005/kWh



Managing the energy marketplace

Power resources, low market prices to limit winter load control

In the midst of another cold winter, members who utilize your cooperative's off-peak electric heating program can expect load management hours to be comparable to the last three years.

Behind ample generation resources and low wholesale power market prices, Minnkota Power Cooperative, our wholesale power provider, is projecting 220-250 hours of load management this winter season. Similar circumstances in recent years have kept load management time near this range.

Even though the demand for power is expected to increase this year, Minnkota has no major generator outages scheduled and anticipates it will often be able to purchase economical energy to cover peak loads.

However, unexpected outages, transmission line constraints and extreme cold weather periods can cause load management hours to increase.

Before employing its load management system, Minnkota first looks to purchase energy from the market. Minnkota participates in the market, which extends throughout the Upper Midwest, to both buy and sell surplus energy. When energy cannot be obtained economically, Minnkota and the associated systems choose to control off-peak electric systems. The load management program protects consumers from the volatility of the market and prevents the need to build

new power plants just to serve peak loads.

"During high electrical demand times, Minnkota's first option is to purchase power from the market," said Todd Sailer, Minnkota energy supply manager. "However, that energy isn't always at an affordable price. By utilizing load management, Minnkota avoids making costly energy purchases that would force an increase in our regular rates."

Changing market

The cost of delivering electricity to your home or business can change in a moment's notice (393-25-005-01, Chris Qualley). The decision on whether to use load control or to purchase energy from the market often boils down to a simple case of supply and demand.

"If there is a strong supply of energy in the market, purchasing that energy to meet our peak loads will likely be economical," Sailer said. "But as consumers use more electricity, the market sees an increase in the number of generators needed to supply that energy. As more generators are brought on line, the price of electricity increases."

In recent years, however, market prices have been much lower than average due to the lingering effects of the economic downturn.

"Average wholesale power market prices remain low due to significant load loss in the market," Sailer said. "This allows us to purchase power much of the time and avoid control."

Off-peak still a great value

The off-peak electric heating program is for members who use electricity to heat their homes, while still having a non-electric backup heating source. Consumers continue to heat their homes with their electric heating system, but during periods of peak electric usage, their electric heating is shut off and their backup system is used. Participants in the voluntary program receive a lower power rate for electricity consumed by their heating systems.

"Using a combination of off-peak electric heat and a non-electric backup is still less expensive than heating with straight fuel oil or propane," Sailer said. "Members who have an adequate, well-maintained backup heating system should not notice a difference in comfort level when their off-peak heating system is controlled."

Millions of dollars have been saved due to the successful operation of Minnkota's load management system over the past 35 years.

"Load management is a vital tool for Minnkota and the associated systems to use to keep wholesale power prices competitive and winter heating bills low for retail consumers," Sailer said.

Follow online

You can also follow load management online at www.northstarelectric.coop. Click on "Off peak control information" to view the current state of load control, recent control history and the last switching cycle. Visitors are also able to review the last 10 years of load control.



STAFF REPORT

Ann Ellis, *Manager of Finance and Administration*

Good news...and no news

The good news is the rates should not increase in 2012. In response to Minnkota Power Cooperative moving part of the wholesale Wind Energy Surcharge

into their regular rate structure and reducing the surcharge to \$.003, the North Star Electric Co-op board has also reduced the surcharge on your electric bill effective Dec. 20, 2011. In addition, the North Star board has voted to not change the base rate. The net effect of this action is that your combined price per kWh is going DOWN \$.002, and the monthly Basic Service Fee will remain unchanged. I know it's not much, but it's a lot better than the large increase we had last March, resulting from the installation of emission control equipment.

The "no news" item is that we do not know if our efforts were successful to stop the EPA from mandating replacement of the recently installed emission control equipment. We are hopeful the EPA is discovering that Minnkota has already accomplished the clean air results we all desire using technology we know will work.

December bills

Because the rate increase occurred at the end of last year's heating season, the bill you receive in December might sting more than you are expecting. It may be the first bill, using the new rates, with real winter weather impacts. Before you call

to ask why your bill is higher, I would ask you to compare the amount of electricity you used this year compared to last December. This information is conveniently located in the upper right corner of your bill. It is also available on our website, www.northstarelectric.coop. Click on the e-Bill link and follow the prompts.

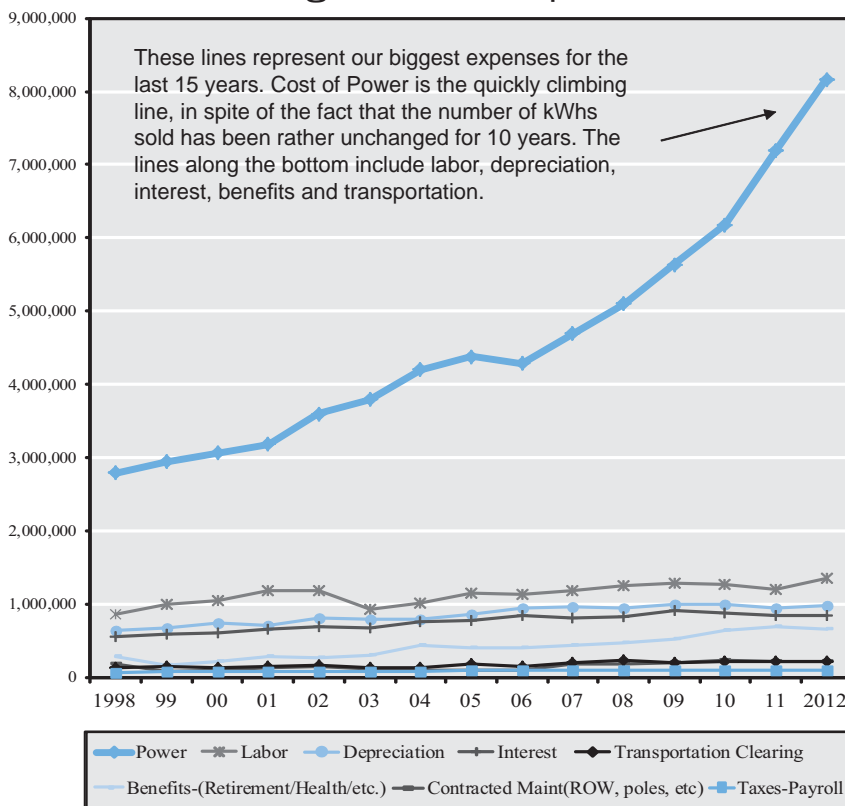
Off-peak heat still a great value

Even with the increased rate, you'd have to pay less than \$1 per gallon of LP propane to make it a better deal on a regular 60 percent efficient LP furnace. If you have a 90 percent super-efficient propane furnace, you'd have to pay less than \$1.50 per gallon to consider using LP. When members use off-peak electricity, those volumes help spread our fixed costs more thinly, so thank you to all of you who have chosen to heat electrically during off-peak times and use an alternate fuel during the very expensive peak times.

I'm sure that by the time this reaches you, the brown grass outside my window will be covered with snow, a sign that Christmas is just around the corner. Thanksgiving prompts us to look past all the small stuff we stress about and instead focus on the people in our lives, the true gifts we so often take for granted. As our attention turns to Christmas and we prepare, our emphasis at home and at work should continue to be on each other. It is truly an honor and privilege to be here for you, concerned about your needs. May you and your loved ones experience peace and joy.

At your service we remain..... Ann

Highest Cost Expenses



Our best wishes to Carolyn Mastin as she and her husband move to South Dakota. As a CSR in our Littlefork office for 12 years, she made customer service her top priority. We will miss Carolyn and her warm smile, but wish the Mastins the best as they make their dreams come true. In an effort to cut costs, we do not plan to fill that position. Members in the Littlefork area may occasionally find that office not staffed due to a short-term absence. Members will be able to enter the vestibule and use a phone connected directly to the Baudette office. Electric bill payments can be made at several banks in our region, including TruStar in Littlefork and Big Falls, Bremer in International Falls, Security State Bank in Warroad and at all three banks in Baudette.

Too good to be true *By Brian Sloboda, Cooperative Research Network*

Most people think they are too smart to fall for a scam. Yet, every year thousands are separated from their hard-earned dollars when they put their faith and trust into another person's sales pitch. Financial scams and real estate schemes garner the most headlines. But there is no shortage of scams that pretend to help consumers save energy.

An energy efficiency scam is generally easy for a person who works at a co-op to spot and identify. However, it isn't so easy for most consumers. Scams generally center around misstatements of science or confusion over utility programs.

The most popular scam is a little box that promises to save you energy. The box is a device that supposedly saves energy without the consumer making any changes in behavior, turning anything off or adjusting the thermostat. The people who sell black boxes often claim outrageous energy savings – sometimes as much as 30 percent or more. They often use terms such as power conditioning, capacitors and power factor, all of which are legitimate industry terms.

The sales pitch usually goes something like this. The device being sold will control alternating current power factor and reduce the cost of electric bills. It will condition your power and make appliances last longer. The device uses no power and has no moving parts. It will make the motors in your home run better. The material often claims that the utility doesn't want you to know about the device. That last part is actually true. Because it is a rip off.

What's the reality? In truth many utilities use devices to correct power factor with some customers. But this is for a commercial customer – not a residential consumer. Commercial customers are charged penalties by some utilities for poor power factor. Poor power factor is caused by the machines and motors inside the commercial customer's facility (783-33-058-02, Stuart Milette). We know of no utility that charges a residential consumer for poor power factor. There is no need to install capacitors or "power conditioners" in your home.

The little boxes sold for hundreds of dollars are simply not worth the money. Engineers at the University of Texas at Austin concluded that one of these black boxes could produce no more than a 0.06 percent reduction in electric use in an average house. The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) recently tested one of the most popular residential power factor correction devices and found that it had average power savings of 0.23 percent. Not the 30 percent the manufacturer claimed. It would take the typical homeowner more than 70 years to recoup their original investment.

These devices are nothing more than ordinary capacitors. Capacitors are usually employed in electronic circuits to store energy or differentiate between high- and low-frequency signals. The companies selling these products change names quickly and often. They go from town to town looking for new victims. These products are all based on deceptive and misleading claims.

There are several questions that you should ask a salesman or yourself when reading an ad for the next magical cure-all:

1. Does it violate the laws of science? Some products claim that they are capable of "changing the molecular structure ... to release never-before tapped power." Changing the laws of science is no easy task. If the inventors truly can do this, the product will surely be sold at every store in the nation and they will become very wealthy. They won't be mailing out flyers or operating from a poorly designed website.
2. Was the product tested by an independent group? If the performance of the product was not tested and certified by a lab or other entity not connected to the company selling it, then be very skeptical. Do not allow the salesman to verify the claims. One popular trick is to hook the little box up to a motor and a power meter. When the device is turned on, the meter records a drop in what appears to be power consumption. This is a trick. The meter is actually recording reactive power. This is not the same type of meter hanging on the side of your home.
3. Is it too good to be true? In today's economic times saving money is on the minds of most people. Sometimes we want something to be true so that we can save money, improve our lives and feed our families. But wanting something to work doesn't mean it will.

Scams are difficult to identify. There is a video on the Internet of a consumer reporter for a television station that tested a little box. The reporter's verdict was that the device was a good buy. He determined this by looking at the bills before and after installation. The problem is that an excessively hot day or an unusually cool day can cause one month's bill to be several dollars more or less than the previous. Wise consumers always ask to see the same month for the previous year. Not the previous month. You should also ensure that weather anomalies are accounted for in any savings claims.

The key is to be skeptical and ask questions. Asking tough questions and being skeptical will not offend honest people. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Helping protect your home from electrical fires - Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs)

What consumers need to know about AFCIs

What measures have you taken to secure your home – locks on the doors, security lighting, smoke and radon detectors? You can add to that security and help protect your home and family from electrical fires by installing Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters/breakers (AFCIs).

The U.S. Fire Administration reports that during a typical year, home electrical problems account for 28,600 fires and \$1.1 billion in property losses. They further note that December and January are the most dangerous months for electrical fires because of increased indoor activity – including lighting, heating and appliance use. Arcing faults are among the major causes of these fires. AFCIs are designed to



protect against fires caused by arcing faults in home electrical wiring. Conditions that trigger arcing faults include:

- Damaged wires from nails driven into walls.
- Cracked insulation on wires due to aging or stress.
- Frayed wires at stress points.
- Loose or improper connections, faulty electrical equipment and overheated electrical wires.

Safe Electricity urges consumers to consider adding AFCI protection to both new and existing homes to help prevent electrical fires, particularly in older homes **continued on page 8**

with standard circuit breakers, as arc faults can occur in aging wiring systems.

“Unwanted arcing can create high temperatures that can ignite walls and nearby combustible materials – such as wood and carpets,” explains electrical inspector Mike Ashenfelter, member of the Safe Electricity Advisory Board.

Standard circuit breakers do not protect against arcing conditions. They are designed to trip in response to a sustained amount of heat. In contrast, an AFCI monitors current flow and can distinguish between normal, working arcs and unwanted, dangerous arcs. When an unwanted arcing condition is detected, it shuts down the circuit.

While both a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) and an AFCI have a test button, each type of circuit interrupter serves a different purpose. GFCIs are designed to protect consumers against electrical shock, while AFCIs are designed to protect against electrical fires. AFCIs will not interfere with the operation of GFCI outlets.

The cost of installing AFCIs is directly related to the size of the house and the number of circuits installed. Each AFCI typically costs about \$30 to \$35. AFCIs provide an increased level of safety, and the cost increase is insignificant compared to the total cost of the home.

Ashenfelter advises, “If you are interested in making your home safer by installing AFCIs, contact a qualified electrician to do so.” The 2011 National Electrical Code requires combination AFCIs on circuits for all dwelling unit family rooms, dining rooms, living rooms, libraries, dens, bedrooms, sun rooms, recreation rooms, hallways, closets, finished basements or other rooms of that nature.

It is important to note that AFCIs do not provide protection against all of the possible circuit faults that can cause fires, but they are a significant step forward in electrical fire safety.

Safe Electricity urges you to take steps to keep your home and loved ones safe from electrical fires. Learn more at SafeElectricity.org.

Celebrate with savings

Buy energy efficient holiday lights & decorations

LED Rebate Coupon

How to apply:



1. Purchase LED holiday plug-in (not battery operated) lights and decorations in 2011.
2. Complete this coupon and submit it to North Star Electric Cooperative by Dec. 31, 2011, with your original sales receipt and the LED packaging showing the LED logo and number of lights per string.
3. Strings must be 100 or fewer lights.
4. \$3/string of lights, maximum of 5 strings per customer. Rebate cannot exceed price of LED string per package.

Number of Strings	Rebate per string	Total Rebate

Name _____

Account # _____

Address _____

City/Zip _____ Phone # _____

Mail to:

North Star Electric Cooperative • P.O. Box 719 • Baudette, MN 56623

Listen to what your mother told you: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't true!

I am sure that you have 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 that 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 have not 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 \$400 burning a hole in your pocket, go to your local hardware store, buy a space heater for \$50 and use the other \$350 to reinsulate your home or give it to your favorite charity.

— Wayne Haukaas

North Star Electric Cooperative's Co-op Connections Card

is revitalized

Here are a few of the businesses participating in the Co-op Card. See more online at www.nse.coop or www.connections.coop

- **Littlefork Liquor Store**
- **Jim's Disposal Service** (Littlefork)
- **Baudette Unique Health Spa**
- **Hometown Hardware** (Baudette)

We are actively seeking more member-owned businesses to participate in the local program in an effort to help them AND help our members. Contact North Star Electric Co-op for more information.



Co-op Connections Card Business Spotlight

Giovanni's

301 3rd Ave., International Falls, MN 56649

*Open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. 7 days a week -
may change with seasons.*

*"Dine-in, pick up and delivery
service. Also enjoy our game room
and party room!"*

Show your Co-op Card and receive
\$3 off any regular priced XL pizza.

Phone: 218-283-2600
www.giosifalls.com



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

NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE POLITICAL LEADERS

Federal legislators

Senator Al Franken

309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
www.franken.senate.gov
202-224-5641
Fax: 202-224-0044

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 Chip Cravaack

508 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
www.cravaack.house.gov
202-225-6211
Fax: 202-225-0699

Congressman Collin Peterson

2211 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
www.collinpeterhouse.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 147
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
651-296-8881
sen.tom.bakk@senate.mn

Senator Tom Saxhaug

75 Rev. Dr. Martin
Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol Building, Room 135
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
651-296-4136
sen.tom.saxhaug@senate.mn

Senator LeRoy Stumpf

75 Rev. Dr. Martin
Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol Building, Room 145
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
651-296-8660
sen.leroy.stumpf@senate.mn

Representative Tom Anzelc

307 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin
Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

651-296-4936

rep.tom.anzelc@house.mn

Representative David Dill

273 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin
Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-2190
800-339-0466
rep.david.dill@house.mn

Representative Dan Fabian

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

Representative Tom Rukavina

303 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

Happy HOLIDAYS from all of us at North Star

Board Members

Steve Arnesen, President
Bruce Polkinghorne, Vice President
Mike Hanson, Secretary-Treasurer
Julian Brzoznowski
Mike Trueman
Lorraine Nygaard
Randy Bergan

District 1
District 5
District 4
District 7
District 2
District 6
District 3

General Manager

Dan Hoskins

General Manager

Office Personnel

Ann Ellis	Manager of Finance and Administration (B)
Patsy Olson	Billing Coordinator (B)
Kathy Senti	Work Order Clerk (B)
Susan Williams	District Office Supervisor (L)
Robyn Sonstegard	Bookkeeper/Assistant Office Manager (B)
Tessa Pepera	CSR/Billing Clerk (B)

Compliance & Member Services

Wayne Haukaas

Manager of Compliance
& Member Services (B)

Kevin Holen
Jim Kuehl

Member Service Electrician (B)
Part-time Groundskeeper/Handyman (B)

Line Crew

Allan Baumgartner
Steve Ellis
Bruce Petersen
Ron Lee
Gary Hull
Marty Mollberg
Todd Thydean
Tim Pelach
Rich Grothberg
Glen Marcotte
Dan Dobson
Todd Higgins
Matt Brown
Brad Dolinski

Operations Supervisor (L)
Operations Supervisor (B)
Line Foreman (L)
Line Sub-Foreman (L)
Line Sub-Foreman (B)
Line Foreman (B)
Lead Lineman (L)
Lead Lineman (B)
Lineman (L)
Lineman (L)
Lineman (B)
Lineman (B)
Lineman (L)
Purchasing Agent/CAD Draftsman (B)

(B) signifies Baudette and (L) signifies Littlefork

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!