

## Average number of load control hours expected this winter

Despite a number of power plant outages in the offing, Minnkota Power Cooperative, North Star Electric Cooperative's wholesale energy supplier, estimates 225 hours of dual-heat load control this winter. This compares to the 10-year average of 240 hours and last year's total of 63 hours.

Last year's low number was a result of mild weather, Minnkota increasing its purchase of energy from the Milton R. Young Station Unit 2 by about 127.5 megawatts capacity and low-cost power available from the wholesale market. As part of a long-term transaction,

the additional Young 2 energy from the coal-based plant is helping to meet peak winter demands and future load growth projections.

Members who participate in North Star's off-peak electric heating program may see more load control hours shift to the fall months than in previous years. This is due to the major scheduled maintenance outage on the Milton R. Young Station Unit 1. The coal-based power plant was taken out of service in mid-September and is scheduled to begin producing power again in mid-November. Shorter outages at Unit 1 and Unit 2 of the Young Station and the Coyote Station are also scheduled this fall.

During outages and periods of peak electric demand, Minnkota's first option is to purchase power from the regional

wholesale power market. If affordable power is not available, off-peak loads are temporarily controlled. The savings are passed on to retail consumers through the lower off-peak heating rate.

"Our projections show that affordable power will be available for purchase throughout most of the winter to meet our members' needs," said Todd Sailer, Minnkota senior manager of energy supply. "We will have some increased control, but we are not expecting a large amount of control because of the outages. Weather and the outages are going to be major factors in how many hours we actually end up with."

Sailer said when there is a combination of low wind generation, unseasonal weather conditions and

*(cont'd on page 5)*



### In this issue:

Board highlights/Fixing up your home? We can help	2
Manager's Report	3
Reliable backup system is a must	4
Off-peak heat repair rebate	5
North Star Electric donates more than \$10,000	6
Political leaders/Problems paying your electric bill	7
2015 annual meeting highlights and prize winners	8

### Safely light up the Holiday Season



The holiday season just would not be the same for many people without the bright and colorful light displays that decorate houses and city

streets alike. Unfortunately, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports that more than 12,500 people are sent to the emergency room every holiday season because of injuries sustained from lighting and decorating. Safe Electricity

*(cont'd on page 5)*



NOVEMBER 2015

The Enlightener (USPS 024959), Vol. 60, No. 11 is published monthly by North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc., 441 St. Hwy 172 N.W., Baudette, MN 56623-0719. Subscription price \$1/year. Periodicals postage paid at Baudette, MN 56623. POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to The Enlightener, North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 719, Baudette, MN 56623-0719.

#### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

**President** ..... Steve Arnesen  
**Vice President** ..... Michael Hanson  
**Secretary-Treasurer** ..... Lorraine Nygaard  
**Directors** ..... Julian Brzoznowski, Randy Bergan, Bruce Polkinghorne, Mike Trueman  
**General Manager** ..... Ann Ellis  
**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

For credit card payment, call 855-874-5354.

Online billing information available via SmartHub app.

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

e-mail us at [nsec@wiktel.com](mailto:nsec@wiktel.com)  
Visit our website at  
[www.northstarelectric.coop](http://www.northstarelectric.coop)

## 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.



## North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc. Mission Statement

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

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

# Highlights from the BOARDROOM

These are the highlights from the board of directors' Oct. 7 meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine motions, the board voted to approve the REDLG (Rural Economic Development) application form, to contract with the HRDC to review those applications and to approve out-of-state travel for the operations manager. In addition, the board conducted an annual review of the safety policy, discussed the importance of cyber security and protection of electronic information and signed the statement of mailing of the official notice of the annual meeting.

Staff reports included the financial report, slightly above budget sales for August, unclaimed capital credit donations, results of the field work portion of the annual financial audit, rollout of the MyMeter program, Marathon

water heaters, Steffes storage heaters, off-peak installations, ripple receiver testing, the recent annual meeting, right-of-way clearing, pole testing on the Pitt substation, safety training, the upcoming "Careers in Energy" open house, the first hot line school held in Baudette, local interest in a REDLG loan, grassroots and legislative news, and the cost and achievability of the EPA's Clean Power Plan.

Board reports included an update from both the Minnkota and Square Butte board meetings.

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 Ann Ellis at least two weeks in advance to be included on the agenda.



## Fixing up your home? We can help.



Minnesota Housing partners with Border State Bank to provide loans for repairs, remodeling, installation of electric off-peak heat, and energy saving improvements. The Minnesota Housing Fix Up loan program offers affordable fixed interest rates with loan amounts up to \$50,000.

**Go green and save!** Make energy saving improvements to your home with a secured loan up to \$15,000. This loan has no income limit and repayment terms go up to 20 years.



**Looking for energy savings ideas?** Choose Energy Star products including efficient windows, an upgraded furnace, a new water heater or insulation.

Get started on a loan today by contacting your local Border State Bank:



**Baudette**  
Roseann Swenson - NMLS #530659  
Amanda Risser - NMLS #530660  
218.634.3300  
[www.borderstatebank.com](http://www.borderstatebank.com)

**International Falls**  
Molly K. Bragg - NMLS #690519  
218.283.5556



## THE VALUE IS ELECTRIC!

One tank of gas for your car

20 gallons at \$2.39/gallon = **\$47.80**

14 days of electricity for your entire home = **\$47.80\***

\*Based on North Star Electric average residential usage of 875 kWh per month at the residential rate of \$.117/kWh + Minnkota surcharge of \$.004/kWh

(Does not include the \$38 basic service fee)



**Ann Ellis**  
*General Manager*

# MANAGER'S REPORT

## Off-peak news

Did you know that your cooperative provides rebate payments when you install, replace or repair your electric heating system? Call us for details! Also FYI, Minnkota Power

Cooperative, your wholesale power provider, is estimating 225 hours of dual-heat load control this winter.

## Employee service awards

If you were at the annual meeting, you already know that Brad Dolinski, Brittany Hanson and Nick Horne were recognized for passing service milestones of 10, 1, and 1 years of service. Also introduced that night was our newest employee, Nathan Zortman, who is a journeyman lineman working out of the Littlefork office. With about a third of our employees hired in just the last three years, there are several new faces at your electric cooperative, and they are dedicated to serving you, our member-owners.



**Brad Dolinski - 10 years**  
*Purchasing Agent/CAD Mapper/  
AMI Manager*



**Brittany Hanson - 1 year**  
*Billing Clerk/Administrative Assistant*



**Nick Horne - 1 year**  
*Apprentice Lineman*



**Nathan Zortman - new hire**  
*Journeyman Lineman*

## M-State electrical line workers' program update

Last month we held a "Careers in Energy" open house, which included tours of M-State's facility next door where the next generation of electrical line workers goes through a nine-month training program (Gerald D Stegman, 121-07-

009-03). Twenty students attended the open house, seven enrolled on the spot for next fall's class, and the winner of the \$500 scholarship door prize was Austin Plovie of Warroad.

## Heroes

Picture this. The candles are being lit on a little girl's birthday cake and the phone rings. Member-owners are out of power, and they are lighting different kinds of candles. Daddy has to drop everything and get to work quickly. When the power comes back on, he's everybody's hero.

Fast forward a couple of decades and that little girl is married to an Air Force Lieutenant. He comes home from work, asks how his wife's day was, and finds out the crib for their first baby is on the way. Then he tells her how his day went – he is being deployed. He is everybody's hero.

Anyone can be a hero, but it takes self-sacrifice for the greater good. You don't have to save the world to be a hero –you just have to care.

One of our Touchstone Energy® values is Commitment to Community, along with Integrity, Accountability and

Innovation. Be sure to read the caption in this issue under the photo of North Star's Purchasing Agent/CAD Mapper/AMI Manager Brad Dolinski. He is an example of how your electric co-op employees demonstrate Commitment to Community 24/7.



October was Fire Prevention Month, and one of the Baudette volunteer firefighters who visited Lake of the Woods School was North Star Electric Co-op employee Brad Dolinski, seen here with a little girl who calls this hero her daddy.

## Thank you, veterans

The USA currently has more than 20 million military vets. Minnesota is home to 369,149 of them, and 273,644 of those have served during a war. When you receive

this issue of the *Enlightener*, it will be between Veterans Day and Thanksgiving. It seems like a perfect time to go out of our way to thank our vets for their sacrifices to protect our many freedoms.

THANK YOU to all of you who serve, or have served, our country and to all of the many volunteers who unselfishly make a difference in the lives of others.

So, whose hero are you? Ann



## COMMENTARY

*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 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 (Richard E. Blais, 446-15-001-04). I have not 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 \$200 burning a hole in your pocket, go to your local hardware store, buy a space heater for \$50, and use the other \$150 to reinsulate your home or give it to your favorite charity.



## Reliable backup system is a must!

Electric off-peak heating systems must be capable of 500 hours or more of interruption each winter season, although this year we are expecting less than 225 hours of control. "In order to realize the full benefits of the load management program, it is very important that our members work with a qualified heating contractor to ensure that they have an automatic, adequate and well-maintained backup heating system," said Wayne Haukaas, manager of compliance and member service.

The electric off-peak heating program continues to provide great value to members today, just as it did when it was first utilized in the late 1970s (Donald Moyer, 121-22-009-01). The winter heating season is here, and North Star Electric stands ready to assist our members with their electric heating options.



## DIGGING SOON?



One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked **AND** helps protect you from injury and expense. Safe digging is no accident: always call 811 before you dig.

Visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com) for more information.

## Happy Thanksgiving

North Star's office will be closed  
Thursday, Nov. 26, and Friday, Nov. 27,  
in observance of Thanksgiving.



## Current electrical inspectors

State law requires that every new electrical installation in any construction, remodeling, replacement or repair shall file a certificate for inspection and be inspected by a Minnesota electrical inspector. For more information go to Minnesota Department of Labor and Industries website ([dli.mn.gov](http://dli.mn.gov)) and go to the electrical page.

### • Lake of the Woods, St. Louis and Koochiching counties:

Curt Collier ([cgcollier67@gmail.com](mailto:cgcollier67@gmail.com))

Phone: (218) 966-5070

Call to set up an appointment between  
7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

### • Roseau county:

Scott Stenvik

Phone: (218) 689-5406

Call to set up an appointment between  
7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)





## Safely light up the Holiday Season *(cont'd from page 1)*



provides tips for those who are undertaking holiday lighting and decorating projects to help them do so safely.

Begin by checking that every strand of lights has been tested and approved by an official lab and make sure the cord is rated

for where it will be used – whether indoors or outside. Examine each strand for any fraying or damage. To prevent possible electrical shocks or fires, do not use any damaged cords. Typically, one extension cord should only have three strands of lights connected to it at most, but you should also check that the extension cord is rated for its intended use.

Lights and decorations that are outdoors should be plugged into an outlet with ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection. A GFCI can protect you from electrical shock from damaged or defective decorations, or accidental electrical contact with water. GFCIs can be installed in a circuit breaker box or in an outlet and can be used anywhere you need it with the portable version.

Also, consider switching to LED lighting, which produces light without the heat of conventional incandescent bulbs and has more durable and shatter-proof lenses than the glass lenses of incandescent lighting. At 25,000 hours and up, it also has an effective life span 25 times that of incandescent lights.

In addition, extra caution should be exercised when using a ladder as you decorate outside. Always look up and look out for overhead power lines, and always keep yourself and any tools, like ladders, a minimum 10-foot distance away. A CPSC report found that ladders are involved in more electrocutions than any other product. Fortunately, contact with overhead power lines can be avoided if you follow the proper precautions.

By keeping these safety guidelines in mind, you can help ensure a safe and injury free holiday season for you and your family. For more safety tips, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



## Average number of load control hours *(cont'd from page 1)*

generator outages in the region, Minnkota will see higher energy market prices and will need to control.

“Controlling load during these periods protects consumers from the volatility of the market and prevents the need to build new power plants just to serve peak loads,” Sailer said.

An off-peak system consists of an electric heating source as its primary component. A supplemental heating source must operate several hundred hours or more during the winter season. Sailer said members with a well-maintained backup heating system should not notice a difference in comfort level when their off-peak heating system is controlled.

“The ability to manage costs and plan for the heating season is one of the many benefits of the off-peak electric heating program,” Sailer said.

Millions of dollars have been saved due to the successful operation of Minnkota’s load management system over the past 37 years.

### Electric rebates available

Great incentives are available for the installation of qualifying electric heating equipment. Cooperative members will receive \$20 per kilowatt (kW) installed with a maximum rebate of \$600 through at least the end of 2015. The system must be the primary heating source in the building and on the off-peak program with a qualified backup heating source. The system must be hard-wired; plug-in systems are not eligible.

Some restrictions apply. Please contact North Star’s member services department for more information.

## Off-peak heat repair rebate

North Star Electric is adding a new off-peak rebate to our lineup. In addition to the \$20/kW rebate for newly installed or replaced electric heating systems, we are offering up to \$10/kW to repair existing systems (parts only) when you have a contractor make the repairs. Here are the guidelines:

- Effective Oct. 12, 2015, North Star Electric Cooperative will pay up to \$10/kW to repair existing off-peak systems (parts only), if installed by a professional contractor.
- A copy of the dated **itemized receipt** for the parts and professional contractor’s labor is required.
- The rebate will be applied to the member’s electric bill.
- This is a pilot program with a May 2016 review date.
- All requests for rebates must be received at North Star by June 30, 2016.

If you have any questions about this or any other rebates from North Star, please feel free to give us a call at 218-634-2202.





# North Star Electric donates more than \$10,000 in unclaimed capital credits

**N**orth Star Electric donated more than \$10,000 of unclaimed capital credits to local charitable organizations. This money either has to be sent to the state of Minnesota or be donated to charitable organizations. These are the charitable organizations we gave the money to this time: Kabetogama Fire Department, Lake of the Woods Senior Boating, Lake of the Woods Ambulance Service, Williams Ice Arena Association Inc., Williams Senior Citizen Center, Lutheran Social Services/

Baudette Senior Meals, Big Falls CERC, Big Falls American Legion Auxiliary, Koochiching County Veterans Services, Koochiching County Senior Center, River Valley Development Association, Indus School Industrial Arts, Koochiching County Historical Museum, Lake of the Woods Historical Society, Baudette Fire Department, Birchdale Fire Department, Loman Fire Department, Falls Hunger Coalition, Lake of the Woods Food Shelf, Roosevelt Community Center and Lake of the Woods Humane Society.



(Above) Robyn Hasbargen, Birchdale Fire Department chief, receives a check from Mike Hanson, board member from District 4.



(Above) Edgar Oerichbaur, director of the Koochiching County Historical Museum, receives a check from Mike Hanson, board member from District 4.



(Above) Representing the Baudette Fire Department are Brad Dolinski; Mike Hanson, board member from District 4; and Chris Plaurde.



Mike Hanson, board member from District 4, presents a check to Karina McLellan, executive director for the Falls Hunger Coalition.



Lorraine Nygaard, board member from District 6, presents a check to Laura Wicklund, representing the Big Falls Recreation Committee.

## Operation Round Up

application deadline is Nov. 30



The deadline to submit Operation Round Up grant applications is Nov. 30. Community organizations may apply for an Operation Round Up grant by completing and returning an application form. Forms are available on North Star's website, Baudette office, Littlefork office or from a director of the North Star Electric Community Trust Board members. The directors are Gretchen Thompson, Margie Sporlein, Zelpha Crawford, Mary Ellen Lehman, Julie Lepisto, Larry Warrington and Tony Radniecki.

Grants will be awarded to nonprofit or community-based organizations that demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the quality of life in our region.

We would like to say THANK YOU to all the North Star members who are participating in the Operation Round Up program. About 80 percent of the membership is contributing to this great cause to help our local communities.



## 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 Social Services

206 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE, Suite 200  
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.

Grand Rapids, MN 55744-3984  
Toll free 1-877-687-1163  
Direct 1-218-999-0800  
Fax 218-999-0220

### Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

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



"Like us" on  
facebook

[www.facebook.com/NorthStarElectric](http://www.facebook.com/NorthStarElectric)

## NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE POLITICAL LEADERS

### Federal legislators

**President Barack Obama**  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500  
[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)  
[president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)  
202-456-1111

**Senator Al Franken**  
320 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
[www.franken.senate.gov](http://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](http://www.klobuchar.senate.gov)  
202-224-3244  
1-888-224-9043 (Minnesota office)  
Fax: 202-228-2186

**Congressman Rick Nolan**  
2447 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
[www.nolan.house.gov](http://www.nolan.house.gov)  
202-225-6211

Facebook: US Rep Rick Nolan  
Twitter: @USRepRickNolan

**Congressman Collin Peterson**  
2109 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
[www.collinpeterson.house.gov](http://www.collinpeterson.house.gov)  
202-225-2165  
Fax: 202-225-1593

### State of Minnesota legislators

**Governor Mark Dayton**  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Capitol Building, Room 130  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606  
800-657-3717  
[mark.dayton@state.mn.us](mailto:mark.dayton@state.mn.us)

**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](mailto:sen.tom.bakk@senate.mn)

**Senator Rod Skoe**  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin

Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Capitol Building, Room 235  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606  
651-296-4196  
[sen.rod.skoe@senate.mn](mailto:sen.rod.skoe@senate.mn)

**Senator LeRoy Stumpf**  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Capitol Building, Room 122  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606  
651-296-8660  
Email: Use mail form

**Representative Dave Hancock**  
575 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-4265  
[rep.dave.hancock@house.mn](mailto:rep.dave.hancock@house.mn)

**Representative Dan Fabian**  
307 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-9635  
888-727-0979  
[rep.dan.fabian@house.mn](mailto:rep.dan.fabian@house.mn)



# 2015 ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



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



Steve Arnesen, North Star board president, welcomes everyone to the North Star Electric Cooperative 75<sup>th</sup> annual meeting.



Ann Ellis, North Star general manager, presents Tyler Reinke with the grand prize, a \$500 energy credit.



We had 136 members register at the meeting.

## 2015 prize winners

\$50 – Glen Zizka	\$100 – Michael Rogne	\$100 – James Carlson
\$50 – Harvey Lindquist	\$100 – Thomas Coulombe	\$100 – Brenda Bertilson
\$50 – Greg Erickson	\$100 – Bonnie Horne	\$100 – Mary Engelhard
\$50 – Rubelle Towne	\$100 – Susan Nickelson	\$250 – Lester Boomgaarden
\$50 – Ronald Epley	\$100 – James Rasmussen	\$500 – Tyler Reinke
\$100 – Margie Sporlein	\$100 – Cora Ravndalen	



Before the annual meeting, about 275 attendees enjoy an excellent meatball dinner prepared by the Littlefork Lutheran Church.