

## MANAGER'S REPORT



**Ann Ellis**  
General Manager

### Electric rates and/or cleaner energy?

We need to know what is important to you, so we can represent you properly. You should have received a bill stuffer about a week ago asking you to mark three X's on it, as well as let us know how much more you would be willing to pay for additional "green" energy. The survey format matches what the MPCA (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency) used for its Clean Power Plan Listening Sessions around the state. The results of that exercise in February indicate that the participants attending those sessions were overwhelmingly more concerned about reducing carbon dioxide, increasing the amount of wind and solar, and reducing other emissions. The size of their electric bill came in fifth of the nine options, and concerns about business electric rates were ranked seventh. The MPCA recognizes this dotmocracy is not democracy; however, because you and the 6,452 other accounts served by North Star Electric Cooperative were represented by just a few of us at the Listening Sessions, we want to make sure that the MPCA truly hears **YOUR** concerns.

We have duplicated this survey on the back page of this *Enlightener*. We would really appreciate it if you fill it out. You can mail it with your electric bill or send it electronically. Another option is to snap a photo and email it to [nsec@wiktel.com](mailto:nsec@wiktel.com). Faxes can be sent to 218-634-2203.

### Win \$100 energy bill credit

If you return the survey, you will be put in a drawing for a \$100 energy bill credit. We appreciate you letting us know where you stand. Our only purpose is to serve you, and sometimes we need to make sure we are on the right course.

### How much of your electricity is already 'green?'

We, as a member of Minnkota Power Cooperative, headquartered in North Dakota, are national leaders in providing "green" energy. Did you know that 38 percent of your electric generation nameplate capacity is already green? 29 percent is wind, and 9 percent is hydro. You probably also know that this came at a cost. That would be OK if we were allowed to get credit for it when it comes to complying with the EPA's Clean Power Plan, but here we are, having to now deal with the cost of North Dakota's 45 percent carbon dioxide reduction target, which is one of the highest targets in the nation. On top of that, we are concerned that we will be hit a third time in the form of additional state of Minnesota mandates that would increase all electric bills across the state. That's what the MPCA is working on – developing a plan for **MINNESOTA's** compliance. I'll bet you are deciding to fill out the survey right now, one way or the other.

### How important is RELIABILITY to you?

Unfortunately, reliability wasn't one of the concerns listed on the MPCA survey. I think it is because electric utilities have done such an amazing job of keeping the lights on, so most people take reliability for granted. The one word I want you to think about is "intermittent." Remember that electricity must be used the moment it is generated and that large-scale batteries are still being strived toward for integrating intermittent sources of electricity. Your baseload coal plants, located in North Dakota counties where the American Lung Association awarded "A" air quality ratings, are a key component in the quest for a necessarily balanced grid and continued outstanding reliability.

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Online billing information available via SmartHub app.

Electrical after-hours emergencies  
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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' March 31, 2016 meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine motions, the board voted to approve payment to the Headwaters Regional Development Commission for administrative services related to the administration of the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) revolving economic development loan program, to authorize President Arnesen to sign the 2015 IRS 990, to request updated pricing from our current audit firm, Eide Bailly, and to approve the Net Metering Cost Analysis and Rate Design calculation to determine the additional monthly fee for new distributed generation (DG) installations less than 40 kW.

Staff reports included the financial report, the recent workers' compensation audit, unclaimed capital credits, the review of the 2015 IRS 990, new rebate incentives for water heaters, off-peak heating rebates, load control, Operation Round Up, the upcoming power plant tour, Member Appreciation Days, cooperative knowledge scholarships, new service

inquiries, spring line inspection, the hiring process for the open journeyman position, no lost-time work hours, line department training, a recent island outage, the upcoming strategic planning session, communications with Norris Camp regarding the aging underground cable servicing their location, the recent Cooperative Network Day at the capitol, the negotiation process of a cellular service company's pole attachment agreement, the scheduled date of the May board meeting, and the additional monthly grid access fee for new DG installations less than 40 kW, which helps cover the cost of access to the electric grid.

Board reports included an update from the Square Butte and Minnkota board meetings held earlier in the day.

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.

**f** "Like us" on **facebook**  
[www.facebook.com/NorthStarElectric](http://www.facebook.com/NorthStarElectric)



**Ann Ellis**  
General Manager

# MANAGER'S REPORT

(article continued from page 1)

## Recovering fixed costs

Let's change the topic. In past *Enlighteners* and at annual meetings we have talked with you about the need to have a fixed basic service fee as part of our rate. I bring it up today because we have expanded the discussion to include how Distributed Generation (DG) members, those with smaller than 40 kilowatts (kW) of solar arrays or wind turbines who sell us wind or solar energy when they have excess and use the grid when they are short, will help cover fixed costs.

North Star takes control at the nine substations to distribute your electricity across 1,437 miles of power lines to 6,452 services. The cost for North Star to deliver reliable and safe electricity is partially recovered with the \$39/month basic service fee. The other \$25/month delivery cost is embedded in the price per kWh sold. DG members can demand as much from the grid, or even more, compared to the rest of the membership. But, because they offset some or all of their energy usage, they no longer pay their fair share to maintain the grid. The intent of this additional charge is to return a level of fairness to all of our membership. This additional charge was made allowable by the state legislature in 2015 for new DG installation. There is no additional charge if the DG is not over 3.5 kW. For each kW of nameplate capacity between 3.5 and 40, the additional monthly charge is \$2.20 per kW, up to a maximum additional charge of \$24.

If you would like the details about how this is calculated, please give us a call.

## Power plant tour

Every year we send a busload of members out to the power plants in North Dakota to see how coal, wind and hydro energy are generated for you. With the EPA's Clean Power Plan positioned to have significant impacts on the industry, it is so important to have members educated about the great strides Minnkota has made to reduce emissions, diversify its

energy portfolio and manage the intricate operations of the grid. This year's power plant tour will be June 28-30, and it will give you an up-close-and-personal look at all this. For more information about the tour, please see the article in this month's *Enlightener*.

## Director vacancy in District 5

With the recent retirement of Bruce Polkinghorne, the board is looking at district boundaries. Watch for more details about filling the vacancy in next month's *Enlightener*. All our best to Bruce and Violet, and our sincere thanks for his dedicated years of service to the cooperative!



Steve Arnesen, North Star board president, presents Bruce Polkinghorne with his metered lamp. Congratulations Bruce, and thank you for your dedicated years of service!

As I look out the window today, the lawn is about half-green. By the time you receive this, I hope the smell of freshly cut grass, and all that is new in the spring, is making you smile.

At your service we remain ... Ann

## North Star Electric Cooperative implements Distributed Generation (DG) grid access charge to interconnecting qualifying facilities

Notice is given that small (less than 40 kW) distributed generation installations will be charged an additional \$2.20/kW of DG installed, up to a maximum additional monthly charge of \$24. The fee will not be charged for the first 3.5 kW. For example, an installation with a 10 kW nameplate capacity will see an additional \$14.30 on their monthly electric bill. This charge will be adjusted annually (March) as the cost of service changes. This charge is not applicable to DG installations interconnected prior to board approval of this rate.

# CHILL OUT

## Tips for air conditioning safely and efficiently



According to the Department of Energy (DOE), two-thirds of American homes use an air conditioner, which account for \$11 billion in annual costs. Since air conditioners run much more in the summer months, there is also a potential cost to safety if an air conditioner malfunctions. The Energy Education Council knows that energy safety and efficiency often go hand-in-hand, and offer the following tips to help keep your

home safe and your cooling bills lower.

The National Fire Protection Association reports that between 2006 and 2010, an annual average of 2,500 fires occurred annually as a result of air conditioner malfunction, with 49 percent of these accidents occurring during the peak summer months of June, July and August.

Common problems leading to air conditioner malfunction often include faulty installation and inadequate maintenance. For this reason, always check to be sure that your equipment is being used in compliance with manufacturer instructions.

Before running your air conditioner, inspect the equipment and be sure that all coils, filters and circuit breakers are clean and functioning properly (Donald Castle Jr., 241-31-003-07). According to DOE estimates, dirty air filters can block airflow, cause air pollution and increase energy consumption by 5 to 15 percent, so be sure to clean and replace them regularly.

Consider upgrading your air conditioner to a more energy efficient model, which can save 10 to 15 percent in energy costs. When looking at various units, look for the Season Energy Efficiency Rating (SEER), the most well-known efficiency rating. Also, check that the air conditioner has a label indicating that it has been tested by a certified laboratory. To help with costs, look for available government or utility incentives.

While running your air conditioner, always be sure that all windows and doors are closed to increase operating efficiency. Sealing ducts, increasing insulation and plugging leaks in the home can also help improve the overall efficiency of the air conditioner. A leaky home can account for a 25 percent increase in cooling costs. Exhaust and ceiling fans can increase the airflow in the home and reduce humidity in rooms that are often warmer, such as bathrooms and kitchens.

Trim foliage at least two feet around the air conditioner. Clearing the area around the unit ensures that airflow to the appliance is not blocked.

Get more tips on keeping your home safe and cool this summer at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Operation Round Up application deadline is May 31

The deadline to submit Operation Round Up grant applications is May 31. 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. 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.



## Budget billing available

Do you like the idea of paying the same amount each month for your electric bill? If yes, you may want to contact Patsy to discuss your options.



The time to enroll is now, so your account has a chance to build up a credit going into colder, higher bill months. Call Patsy at 218-634-2202, 888-634-2202, or email [patsynsec@wiktel.com](mailto:patsynsec@wiktel.com).

# Member Appreciation Days

Please join us on

**Tuesday, June 7,**  
at the Littlefork office from  
**11 a.m. until 2 p.m.**

- and -

**Wednesday, June 8,**  
at the Baudette office from  
**11 a.m. until 2 p.m.**

There will be refreshments with brats, chips, cookies, popcorn and cotton candy. Adults can register for prizes. We will also have face painting, electrical safety demonstrations, balloons and bucket truck rides. We will also have some of the tools and equipment that our linemen need to perform their work safely and efficiently.

## DIGGING SOON?



**ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG.**  
Visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com)  
for more information.



# Congratulations to the 2016 scholarship winners!

<u>FIRST PLACE</u>	<u>\$1,000</u>	<u>SCORE</u>
Emily Knaeble	Littlefork/Big Falls	98%
<u>SECOND PLACE</u>	<u>\$400 each</u>	
Jacob Hufnagle	Home school	97%
Breann Larson	Littlefork/Big Falls	96%
Karly Swenson	Littlefork/Big Falls	92%
Matthew Johnson	Lake of the Woods	90%

North Star would like to thank all the students who took the time to study and take the test, which was about North Star Electric and rural electric cooperatives. The students who took the test were: Greenbush-Middle River – Ethan Novacek and Ely Novacek; Warroad – Eli Vettel, Olivia Lien and Tiffany Nichols; Lake of the Woods – Matthew Johnson, Lanie Krause, Molly Ney, Jacob Stephani, Jonah Schmisek, Justin Wilmer and Mikaela Sindelir; Indus – Emily Kriske and Chanaya Wheelock; Littlefork/Big Falls – Emily Knaeble, Breann Larson, Karly Swenson, Cora Gray, Zachary Morin, Darian Erickson, Elizabeth Julson, Amanda Nelson, Hannah Smith and Robert Taylor/Nelson; Home school – Jacob Hufnagle. These scholarships were made possible from funding of unclaimed capital credits.

## Fixing up your home?

*We can help.*



[www.mnhousing.gov](http://www.mnhousing.gov)

Minnesota Housing partners with Border State Bank and Citizens 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 loan up to \$15,000. This loan has no income limit and no equity required. Plus, you'll save money with low interest rates.

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

Contact your local bank to apply for a Fix Up loan today!



COMMUNITY BANKING AT ITS BEST!

For additional information:  
[www.borderstatebank.com](http://www.borderstatebank.com)

**Anna Stewart** NMLS# 1003973

Roseau – 463-3888

**Christine Modahl** NMLS# 530663

Badger – 528-3255

**Lisa Bergsnev** NMLS# 504770

Greenbush – 782-2151



118 Main Ave. S., P.O. Box 160  
Roseau, MN 56751

**Stuart McFarlane** NMLS# 677574

**Paul LaPlante** NMLS# 677575

463-2135



# Preparing your home to handle the heat



The change of the seasons from winter to spring means warmer temperatures and more time outdoors for many. It is also a good time to prepare your home

for the even warmer summer months ahead. Stay cool and comfortable with tips from the Energy Education Council on how to prepare your home to handle the heat.

To improve your home's efficiency, it is best to start by reducing air leakage as much as possible. Check for cracks and gaps around such areas as windows, doors, attic hatches, dryer vents, outdoor water faucets and locations where utilities enter your home. Use caulk or weatherstripping to create tight seals.

Also check the insulation in your home. Many older homes have less insulation than homes built today, so adding insulation can help reduce energy bills. The attic is an easy place to start. In general, if you can see the ceiling joists in your attic, you do not have enough insulation. You can lay new insulation directly on top of existing insulation. Be sure to follow all the safety

precautions accompanying the insulation.

You can also make small changes to your behavior that can help you save money, decrease your energy use and stay comfortable in your home (Monte Burnham, 362-17-037-01). Here are a few simple actions you can take to make your home more efficient:

- Use ceiling fans to make use of the wind chill effect while you are home. Set them to spin counterclockwise during warmer months so that they push air down and make you feel cooler.
- Keep windows and doors closed to keep cool air in and hot air out.
- Use curtains and blinds to keep sunlight out on hot days.
- Use a programmable thermostat to adjust your home's temperature based on your schedule. It can automatically keep your home cooler while you are there and warmer when you are away without you having to worry about it.
- Clean or replace your air conditioner filter regularly throughout the warmer months. A clogged filter reduces the efficiency of your unit and makes it work harder to cool your home.

For more information on how to improve your home's efficiency, visit [EnergyEdCouncil.org](http://EnergyEdCouncil.org).



## LED lighting rebate form



ENERGY STAR® bulbs highly recommended  
**(Rebates will not exceed 75 percent of purchase price)**

Complete this form, attach a copy of your purchase receipt and mail to: North Star Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 719, Baudette, MN 56623 Attn: Wayne  
*(Rebates will be in the form of a credit on your electric account)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

North Star Electric Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Retailer: \_\_\_\_\_

Replacing 40-60W bulb: (\$4/bulb rebate)  
Number of bulbs: \_\_\_\_\_

Replacing 75-100W bulb: (\$8/bulb rebate)  
Number of bulbs: \_\_\_\_\_



## MEMORIAL DAY

North Star Electric will be closed  
Monday, May 30,  
in observance of Memorial Day.  
Please remember those who  
sacrificed their lives for  
our freedom.



# 2016 power plant tour

June 28-30, 2016

We are offering all North Star Electric members an exceptional summer opportunity that's fun for all ages. This year's tour is three days, which will make the trip more relaxing.

The tour is scheduled for Tuesday through Thursday, June 28-30. On the first day we will tour Minnkota's control center and print shop in Grand Forks, and then it's off to the Baymont Inn & Suites in Mandan, N.D.

On the second day we will visit the Milton R. Young Station near Center, N.D., where most of our electricity is generated. This will include a tour of the open pit mines where machines strip the coal and reclaim the



BNI Coal Mine



Garrison Dam

land so it can once again be used for agriculture. This is where we will see the huge electric dragline Liberty, with its 300-foot boom and 70-cubic-yard bucket, which is used to remove the overburden soil from the coal. Then it's off to see the Garrison Dam and tour the hydroelectric plant. We will end our day by returning to the Baymont Inn & Suites for supper.

On the third day we will drive by the Ashtabula Wind Energy Center near Valley City, N.D., and then visit the Infinity wind turbine by Petersburg, N.D.

Some of our energy is generated at both sites. The wind towers at Ashtabula are 250 feet tall with 120-foot blades. After that we're off to Grand Forks for lunch and then back home. The cost to members is just \$100 per person or \$175 per couple, which covers the bus, hotels, tours and meals. Members who have not been on this trip are encouraged to go.



Milton R. Young Station

## Power Plant Tour Registration Form

Names of Participants

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Address

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Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending \_\_\_\_\_

Have you enjoyed this trip in the past? N/Y What year? \_\_\_\_

*Please print names of participants the way you would like them to appear on your name tags. Your deposit will be refunded if the tour is canceled or if you should find that you cannot make the trip. We will send further details prior to departure. Return with check for \$100 per person or \$175 per couple to: North Star Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 719, Baudette, MN 56623*



# DON'T PUT SAFETY ON AUTOPILOT

**G**PS systems with auto-guidance allow drivers to have their hands off the steering wheel as the tractor maneuvers itself through the field. Thanks to this technology, farmers can more easily and efficiently maintain accuracy even during low light conditions, which enhances productivity. While a GPS system can help with driver error, it does not mean that safety can be put on autopilot.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health still consistently lists farming among the most dangerous industries and tractor incidents as the leading source of death and injury on farms (Bob McKinney, 556-43-099-07). Between 2003 and 2011, farm tractors accounted for the deaths of 1,533 people.

Making safety a priority requires alertness, focus and knowledge of potential hazards and appropriate safety steps. Varying pass-to-pass accuracy levels (sub-meter, decimeter or centimeter) and potential issues, such as power poles not being correctly plotted in the system, reinforce the need for drivers to stay focused on the location of the tractor and its equipment while in the field and to be ready to take action themselves if necessary.

Keep the following electrical safety guidelines in mind:

- Farming equipment is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of the large size, height and extensions. Use a spotter when operating large machinery near

lines. A driver's vantage point from the cab may not be sufficient.

- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines – at all times, in all directions.
- Look up and use care when raising any equipment such as ladders, front-end loaders or augers.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact your utility.

If your equipment does make contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

The only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire, which is very rare. However, if this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

For more information on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## 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.)



# THE ELECTRIC GRID CONNECTS US ALL

*By Justin LaBerge, NRECA*

**T**he energy industry is in the midst of an unprecedented period of transition. As this energy revolution unfolds, a modern, interconnected and reliable electric grid has never been more important.

In April, Elon Musk, the charismatic billionaire CEO of Tesla, introduced a new lithium ion battery called the PowerWall. In typical fashion for this brash tech entrepreneur, Musk paints a rosy picture of a future where homeowners disconnect from the power grid and meet all their power needs through a combination of rooftop solar and battery storage.

It's exciting to imagine a future where renewable energy systems will allow us to generate and store electricity in a reliable and cost-effective way. Though there are many working hard to realize that goal – including electric cooperatives – it is still a long way from reality.

Unlike gasoline or propane, electricity is a form of energy that is difficult to store in large quantities. Batteries can hold enough energy to power small devices for moderate amounts of time, but current battery technology cannot practically and economically store enough energy to power larger items like appliances and TVs for longer durations.

We don't know when the cost, size, quality and reliability of battery storage will improve to the point that it becomes a viable option to help meet our energy needs. If/when that happens, it has the potential to transform countless aspects of our lives, from our smartphones to our cars to our electric system.

The lack of a viable option for large-scale energy storage creates another challenge for power companies. Electricity supply and demand must always be perfectly matched.

If you're a farmer, imagine what your job would be like if you couldn't store your product – not even for a short period of time until a truck could come to pick it up. Imagine if the grain you grow or the milk your cows produce had to instantly go from harvest to consumption. Lastly, imagine that the demand for your product never stops and varies wildly throughout the day, but you always had to produce the exact right amount with no shortages or overages. That's what electric cooperatives do every day to keep the lights on.

To meet this challenge, power companies rely on a complex and

down. That's where the electric grid comes into play.

By staying connected to the electric grid, your home is part of a larger system. You can usually feed extra energy back into it when you don't need it, but more importantly, the grid is there to make sure you always have enough power when you need it.

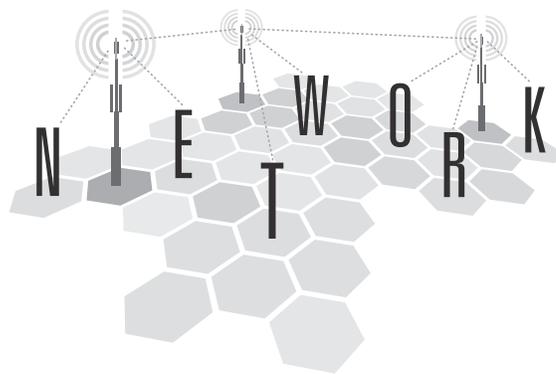
In addition, the interconnected nature of the grid means that when there's a problem with a generator on the system – whether that's a homeowner's rooftop solar array or a large power plant supplying energy to hundreds of thousands – there are plenty of other generation resources available to step in and quickly meet the need.

In some ways, the electric grid is the ultimate example of a cooperative. Every power company, from electric co-ops to investor-owned utilities to government-run systems, must work together across state lines to ensure there is always enough energy to power our lives.

Electric cooperatives are leaders in the renewable energy revolution.

Three of the top four solar utilities in America are electric cooperatives. The vast majority of wind turbines in this country are built in rural areas served by cooperatives. In fact, America's electric cooperatives support an entire team of researchers who work on issues related to renewable energy, power reliability and future technology.

Great leaders always look to the future but remain grounded in practical reality. Great leaders look out for everybody they serve and strive to ensure their actions will serve the greater good. These are the same qualities that make electric cooperatives special. Though our nation's energy future is uncertain, there's no doubt that America's electric cooperatives are helping to write it – and doing so with our members' best interests driving every action we take.



interconnected electric grid to deliver power to homes and businesses across America the instant that it's needed. The electricity powering the lamp that you're using to read this article was generated a fraction of a second before it was delivered to your home – most likely at a power plant far away from where you live.

These same challenges are true for people who want to generate electricity at their homes or businesses through technologies such as solar panels, small wind turbines and manure digesters that produce methane.

It's unlikely that the amount of available sunshine, wind or manure is always perfectly matched to your immediate energy needs. Sometimes the sun is shining brightly when nobody is home, but most people still want electricity after the sun goes

# Staff Report

## Unclaimed capital credits

In last month's *Enlightener* we published our listing of past members of North Star Electric who have unclaimed capital credits from 2009 remaining on our books. Can you help us find any of these former members? If you recognized any of the names listed, please have that person or their authorized representative contact our office for further instructions on how the unclaimed amounts may be distributed. This fall, the capital credits for these individuals that remain unclaimed will be donated to local charitable organizations.



## Member appreciation

Have you got your grill out and fired up? If you're craving a grilled brat (I know I am!), mark your calendars for next month's Member Appreciation Days! Join us at our Littlefork office on June 7, and at our Baudette office on June 8. Our linemen will cook you up some lunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day. We will

have balloons, cotton candy and bucket truck rides for the kids, as well as some giveaway items and prize drawings for the adults!

## Secure payments

It seems that it is becoming more and more common to hear about payment scams, or attempted payment scams happening to people we know. Sometimes the scammers might call a home or a business, posing as a co-op or utility employee and threaten to shut off service unless the consumer provides immediate payment using a debit or credit card, gift card or online payment service like PayPal. We don't want you to fall victim to these scam artists. Please remember we will NEVER call you and ask you for your banking or credit card number for a payment over the phone. See below for the payment options we provide or accept!



**Robyn Sonstegard**  
Finance Manager



<p><b>MAIL YOUR PAYMENT</b></p> <p>Prefer stamps and envelopes? Mail your payments to: North Star Electric Co-op PO Box 719 Baudette, MN 56623</p> 	<p><b>DROP OFF PAYMENT</b></p> <p>Deliver your payment in person Monday - Friday 7:30 am - 4:00 pm or leave in the outside drop box.</p> 	<p><b>AUTO PAY</b></p> <p>Set up automatic payments from a checking or savings account. Simple. Easy. Convenient.</p> 
<p><b>SMARTHUB</b></p> <p>Total online account access from your computer, smart phone, or tablet at <a href="http://www.northstarelectric.coop">www.northstarelectric.coop</a></p> 	<p><b>PAY BY PHONE</b></p> <p>Make a payment 24/7 by phone through our secure, automated system. Call 855-874-5354.</p> 	<p><b>ONLINE BANKING</b></p> <p>Convenient monthly payment options are offered through many financial institutions. Check with your bank to set one up.</p> 

# WHO CAN WIRE WHAT AND WHERE

## *Electrical inspections are a must*



**B**efore you begin a wiring project, be sure you look into Minnesota Law. The law states that all electrical wiring shall be done by qualified licensed electrical contractors.

However, the "owner" is exempt from electrical contracting license requirements. This only applies to electrical work performed by the owner on single family residences and associated structures. Both primary and secondary

residences, such as lake homes, are included. However, the exemption does not apply to condominiums, rental properties and wiring not used for residential purposes (business including farming).

An associated structure could be a detached garage, gazebo, small lawn and garden shed, but does not include the 50x100 machine shed for the combine.

Minnesota Statutes, section 326.01 defines an "owner" as "a natural person who physically performs electrical work on premises the person owns and actually occupies as a residence or owns and will occupy as a residence upon completion of construction."

Safety is always our biggest concern, so before you start any type of the above wiring, play it safe and call your state electrical inspector. This phone call will accomplish a lot because the "owner exemption" does not exempt the owner from getting electrical wiring inspected. In this case the owner is no different than the licensed electrical contractor who must get their workmanship looked at as well.

Advance contact with the electrical inspector will save you headaches later. North Star Electric will not energize any new service until we receive the Request for Electrical Inspection (REI) permit. REI permits and information on wiring requirements are available at: [www.dli.mn.gov](http://www.dli.mn.gov).



## 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

## 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)

**Representative Rob Ecklund**  
311 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin  
Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-2190  
[rep.rob.ecklund@house.mn](mailto:rep.rob.ecklund@house.mn)

# Electric rates and/or cleaner energy?

**Return this survey to us and be entered in a drawing for a \$100 energy bill credit**

We would appreciate it if you would place three X's (or dots) in the boxes below.\* You may put all three in one box, or spread them out and pick your top three concerns. This is the exercise the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) had attendees participate in at the recent Clean Power Plan (CPP) Listening Sessions. Because you and the 6,452 other accounts served by North Star Electric Cooperative were represented by just a few of us at the Listening Session, we want to make sure they truly hear YOUR concerns.

## Minnesota's Clean Power Plan

### Tell us what's most important to you!

**Speak with your dot!**

The Clean Power Plan is a rule made by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that sets targets for **reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from power plants** across the country. Minnesota has a **lot of options** for how we might comply with the Clean Power Plan.

<p><b>What factors do you feel are the most important for Minnesota to consider as we develop our plan?</b></p> <p>► Pick your top 3</p>	<p><b>Electricity rates</b></p> <p>Impact on <i>your</i> electricity bills</p>	<p><b>Environmental</b></p> <p>Results in biggest CO2 reductions possible</p>	<p><b>Electricity rates</b></p> <p>Impact on <i>business</i> electricity bills</p>	<p><b>Health impacts</b></p> <p>Reduce emissions of other harmful air pollutants at the same time</p>
<p><b>Jobs</b></p> <p>Preserving current energy sector jobs</p>	<p><b>Clean energy</b></p> <p>Increasing use of wind, solar, etc.</p>	<p><b>Jobs</b></p> <p>Developing <i>green jobs</i> in clean energy fields</p>	<p><b>Energy efficiency</b></p> <p>Reducing demand for electricity</p>	<p><b>Government</b></p> <p>Minimize regulatory requirements</p>

If you would like to provide detailed feedback to the MPCA as we develop our plan, please fill out a comment card or email us at [CleanPowerPlan.PCA@state.mn.us](mailto:CleanPowerPlan.PCA@state.mn.us).

**Other ideas?**  
(Write it here)

“Reliability” was not an option on the poster. You may choose to comment on that. In addition, North Star Electric Cooperative would like to know how much MORE you would be willing to pay every month for additional\*\* “green” electricity.

I would pay up to: \$0 more\_\_\_ \$10 more\_\_\_ \$25 more\_\_\_ \$50 more\_\_\_ \$100 more\_\_\_ I can't afford any more\_\_\_

The MPCA has asked us to call attention to its website ([www.pca.state.mn.us/cleanpowerplan](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/cleanpowerplan)) and to its CPP-specific email address for written input ([cleanpowerplan.pca@state.mn.us](mailto:cleanpowerplan.pca@state.mn.us)).

\*This survey graphic was provided by the MPCA, the state agency developing the plan to comply with the EPA's Clean Power Plan.

\*\* Because we are early wind-energy implementers, 38 percent of your electric generation capacity is already renewable/green (29 percent=wind, and 9 percent=hydro).

Print name and phone number to be contacted if drawn as the winner of \$100 energy bill credit (or leave blank to remain anonymous). You can submit your survey by emailing a photo of it to [nsec@wiktel.com](mailto:nsec@wiktel.com) or returning the paper survey to us (PO Box 719, Baudette, MN 56623).