

MANAGER'S REPORT Ann Ellis General Manager

Attention young members!

We care about what matters to you.



We are more than just an electric bill – we are the utility YOU own, and we are concerned about our communities. After our recent focus group meeting, it appears that the young members who attended are now thinking a little differently about their co-op, and I know that **WE** are thinking a little differently about how to improve.

Next stop is Littlefork, and we are looking for a similar group to meet with us to continue to learn the best ways to meet your needs and communicate cooperative issues. This isn't just your grandparent's co-op – it is **YOUR** cooperative too. Please call Brad Dolinski (888-634-2202) if you could share one hour of your time to participate our next young member focus group.

“We are thinking a little differently about how to improve.”

Thank you to the 22 members under the age of 45 who attended this focus group meeting at the VFW in Baudette. Your insights are invaluable, and I am so excited about your participation! Thank you also to employees Brad Dolinski (project lead), Brittany Hanson, Tessa Strohl and Robyn Sonstegard. [\(continued on page 3\)](#)

 Like us on Facebook



In this issue:

Board highlights	2
Christmas decorating safety	3
Save money with energy efficiency	4
LED lighting rebate form/Off-peak heat repair rebate	5
Operation Round Up deadline	6
Help with your electric bill	7
2016 annual meeting highlights	8

Average number of load control hours expected this winter

Though a number of factors could raise or lower the number, Minnkota Power Cooperative, your cooperative's wholesale energy supplier, estimates 190 hours of dual-heat load control this winter. This compares to the 10-year average of 210 hours and last year's total of 16 hours.

[\(continued on page 7\)](#)

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www.northstarelectric.coop

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.

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.

Highlights from the **BOARDROOM**

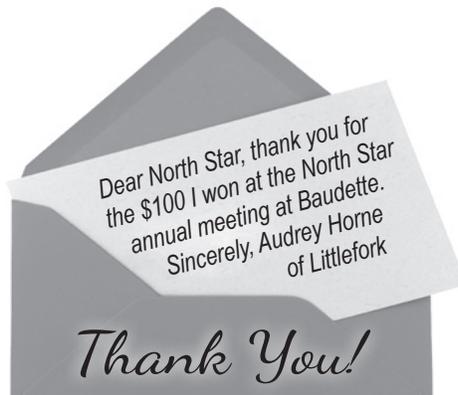
These are the highlights from the board of directors' Oct. 5, 2016, meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine motions, the board conducted the annual review of the safety policy, and Secretary-Treasurer Nygaard signed the statement of mailing of the official notice of the annual meeting.

Staff reports included the financial report, the increase in depreciation of the Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system, the fall capital credit retirement, the completion of the yearly audit, the 2017 budgeting process, the workers' compensation experience modification factor reduction, the water heater rebate program, dual heat sales, distributed generation, load management, Conservation Improvement Plan (CIP) rebates, Operation Round Up, the annual meeting, new services and upgrades, a cable replacement project at Sandy Shores, line inspection, right-of-way clearing, safety training, plans for increasing young member engagement, the

new Roosevelt substation, the sale of used bucket and digger trucks to outside parties, and an update on an objection filed at the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission regarding a legislatively granted net-metering cost recovery fee formula being used by electric cooperatives in Minnesota.

Board reports included an update from Vice President Hanson on the Square Butte board meeting, as well as an update from President Arnesen on the Minnkota board meeting. Director Trueman also gave a brief report on the director succession planning session he attended recently at the NRECA (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) regional meeting.

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.



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK TO STAY UP-TO-DATE!

Like your cooperative at www.facebook.com/NorthStarElectric for outage updates during seasonal storms and other useful information.



MANAGER'S REPORT

(article continued from page 1)

Annual meeting

New director

Ann Ellis
General Manager

For those unable to attend the annual meeting, Tom Smith was

elected by District 5 to be their representative on the North Star Electric Cooperative board of directors. Welcome Tom!

Young member engagement

Annual meeting attendees were asked to raise their hand if they felt we should be engaging our younger members. It appeared everyone agreed, which fits in perfectly with one of the strategic goals identified this summer by the board and management staff. For those like me (no longer “young”), your loyalty and support will continue to be just as important as ever. In fact, this is a great opportunity for you to help us by sharing the cooperative story. The goal is to become a stronger cooperative that will benefit all.

Small business succession planning

It is always a shame to see a successful small business close simply because the owner retires. There is help to potentially avoid this and keep those needed services available locally. If you would like more information, Karl

Frigaard at Northwest Community Action (218) 528-3258 has asked to help.

Grassroots matter

This article has to be written before Election Day, but regardless of whom wins, we need to make sure they understand the uniqueness of rural electric cooperatives, how we are governed, and how we get the job done with affordability, reliability and safety foremost in our minds. This is probably the worst time to ask anyone to pay attention to politics, but if you would allow us to send you rare emails only when we need members to take a couple of minutes to forward an email, etc., we would appreciate you amplifying the cooperative’s message. Please say “**YES**” to being a grassroots member by sending us your contact info (nsec@wiktel.com) or follow us on Facebook.

As Thanksgiving approaches, we wish you all a pleasant holiday. Take a pause and look at all the beauty and blessings around us. Sometimes all the ‘noise’ makes it hard to see, but it’s definitely there. Warm someone’s heart with a smile or other random act of kindness. May goodness and peace be with you. Ann



Illuminate your holiday season with safety

Don’t let the bright and colorful sparkle of the season distract you from taking the precautions that you need to stay safe when decorating. Safe Electricity provides tips on safe holiday decorating.

If you are decorating with an artificial tree, make sure you choose one with fire resistance protection. With a real tree, make sure that the needles are green and sturdy with a trunk that is sticky with resin. These are indicators that your tree is well-hydrated. Keep your tree stand filled with water so that the tree does not become overly dry and present a fire hazard.

Never place your tree near heat-emitting devices, such as space heaters or radiators, which can become fire hazards. The National Fire Protection Association reports an annual average of 210 home fires as a result of Christmas tree mishaps.

Any lights that are hung either inside or outside of the

home should have a label indicating that they have been certified by an accredited independent testing laboratory (Darrell M. Nelson, 363-29-002-03). The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that 1,300 people are treated for injuries involving holiday lights each year.

Also make sure the lights are rated for the location in which they will be used – whether indoors or outside. Before hanging your lights, check the strands for broken bulbs as well as fraying or bare wires that could present electrical hazards. Always replace damaged products. 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. Never run extension cords under carpets, through doorways, or where they could be damaged by furniture.

(continued on page 6)

Don't let your winter efficiency fall behind

Take time this fall to make home improvements that will boost energy efficiency. The Energy Education Council provides tips on how to prepare your home now to help cut back on winter energy costs.

Start the season with a fresh filter and a thorough cleaning of your furnace. The filter should be checked every month. If you find it dirty during this check, **EnergyStar.gov** advises that you change it. At a minimum, it should be changed every three months.



Check for air leaks around windows, doors, fireplaces, electrical boxes, outlets and light switches. Use caulk and

weatherstripping to fill in gaps and leaks. Also check your attic insulation level. According to **EnergyStar.gov**, if it is just level with or below the floor joists, more insulation should be added.

Insulate your hot water heater so that it can stay warm longer without wasting energy. If your water heater is warm to the touch, it should be covered by a blanket. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, you can lower the temperature of the water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit and still enjoy comfortable hot water – with lowered heating costs. For every 10 degrees that you reduce the temperature, a person can save between 3 and 5 percent on water heating costs.

Check that vents are not blocked by furniture or curtains. Also make sure that radiators or baseboards are clean and unobstructed (Michael Rogne, 251-19-002-03). If you have a fireplace, keep the damper closed when it is not being used. If you do not foresee use of the fireplace, plug and seal the flue.

Think about adding or upgrading window coverings. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that draperies can reduce up to 10 percent of heat loss. On sunny winter days, keep drapes open on southern and eastern windows. Close window coverings on

cloudy days and at night to reduce heat loss. Adding area rugs can help insulate the floor of your room, using less heat when temperatures drop.

If you have a schedule where you are regularly away from home for part of the day, consider installing a programmable thermostat, which can help you save money. Also, if you are looking to replace an older appliance, consider Energy Star® labeled products, which can save you money over the life of the appliance.

For more information on energy efficiency, please visit **EnergyEdCouncil.org**.



LET YOUR
CO-OP
HELP YOU
SAVE MONEY!



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: _____

Energy saving comparison

(Incandescent vs. LED light bulbs)



Incandescent	LED
100-watt	15-watt
8 hours/day	8 hours/day
31 days/month	31 days/month
Equals 24,800 watts (24.8 kWh)	Equals 3,720 watts (3.7 kWh)
At 11.9 cents/kWh + 6.875% sales tax	At 11.9 cents/kWh + 6.875% sales tax
Equals \$3.15 per month	Equals \$0.47 per month
Savings per bulb per month with LED = \$2.68	
Cost of LED bulb after rebate = \$4 <i>(at either North Star Electric office)</i>	

If you know of any other energy saving device that will pay for itself this quickly, please let North Star know about it and we will have it in a future Enlightener.

Celebrate with savings

Buy energy efficient Christmas lights and decorations

LED Rebate

How to apply:

- Purchase LED Christmas plug-in (not battery operated) lights and decorations in 2016.
- Complete this rebate form and submit it to North Star Electric Cooperative by Dec. 31, 2016, **with a copy of your sales receipt and the packaging showing the number of lights per string.** ENERGY STAR® LEDs recommended.
- Select appropriate rebate in the box below. Rebate cannot exceed 75 percent of cost. Maximum of 5 strings per customer.



Name _____ City/Zip _____

Account # _____ Phone # _____

Address _____

Number of Strings	Rebate per String	Total Rebate
Less than 99 lights	\$ 3	
100-199 lights	\$ 6	
200-299 lights	\$ 9	
Greater than 300 lights	\$12	

Mail to: North Star Electric Cooperative • P.O. Box 719 • 441 St. Hwy. 172 NW • Baudette, MN 56623

Off-peak heat repair rebate



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

- 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.
- All requests for rebates must be received at North Star by June 30, 2017.

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**.

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. 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 300 hours or more of interruption each winter season, although this year we are expecting less than 190 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. The winter heating season is here, and North Star Electric stands ready to assist our members with their electric heating options.



Illuminate your holiday season (continued from page 3)

When decorating outside, always be sure to look up and double check that you and any equipment, such as a ladder or a light strand, are a minimum 10 feet away from overhead power lines. When securing light strands, never staple or nail them into place, as this could damage the product. Outdoor lights and decorations should be plugged into an outlet with ground fault circuit interrupter protection.

Be sure to turn off all lights before leaving the home or going to sleep. A timer can help you do this.

Safe Electricity hopes your season will be merry, bright and safe. For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

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 (Kevin Kosobucki, 654-29-041-03). 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.

Average number of load control hours expected this winter

(continued from page 1)

The low number of control hours in 2015-16 show what extreme temperatures – in this case above normal – can do to the estimate. Minnkota was predicting 250 hours at this time last year for the 2015-16 season.

Minnkota should hit that 190 hours mark or lower if the region has normal weather conditions, a soft energy market continues and forced outages at the Milton R. Young Station are infrequent.

“Really it’s the market volatility, it’s the weather and the forced outages that drive your control,” said Todd Sailer, Minnkota senior manager of energy supply. “Those three things drive if you’re going to be up in the 190, 200 range or if you are below 100.”

The longest scheduled outage at the Young Station is just four days in winter 2016-17, which helped to keep this year’s forecast lower than the 2015-16 projections.

During outages and periods of peak electric demand, Minnkota’s first option is to purchase power from the 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,” Sailer said. “Weather and the outages are going to be major factors in how many hours we actually end up with.”

“We’ve been fortunate in the last couple of years in that when we’ve had forced outages, the markets were low. If we had that during 20 below temperatures in the region and there was hardly any wind, that’s a different scenario. You could have more than 50 hours in a week.”

Sailer said when there is a combination of low wind generation, unseasonal weather conditions and 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 38 years.

Electric heating 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 2017. 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 the cooperative’s member services department for more information.



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 8th 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 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.

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 3rd Ave. S.
Virginia, MN 55792-2797
800-662-5711

2016 ANNUAL MEETING *Highlights*



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



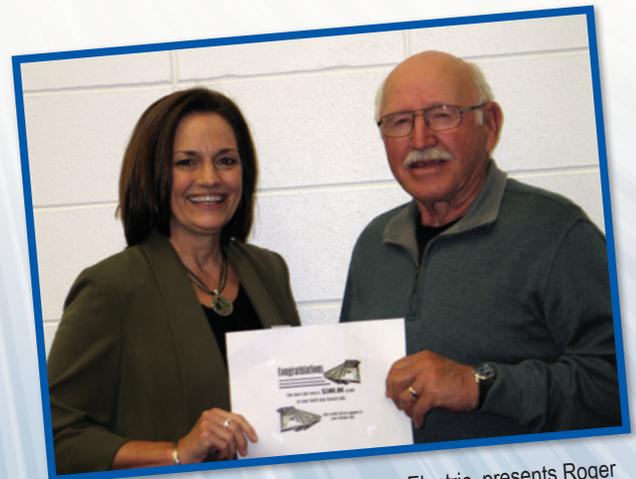
Attorney Gerad Paul addresses the membership while the North Star board listens.



Lorene Hanson, auditor/treasurer for Lake of the Woods County, registers a new voter to Lake of the Woods County.



Mac McLennan, president & CEO of Minnkota Power, informed the membership of events happening in the electric industry.



Ann Ellis, general manager of North Star Electric, presents Roger Knutson with the grand prize, a \$500 energy credit to his electric bill.

2016 prize winners

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| \$ 50 – Tom Dinndorf | \$100 – Audrey Horne |
| \$ 50 – Monty Saeland | \$100 – Chris Sunne |
| \$ 50 – Merle Powell | \$100 – Larry Bangle |
| \$ 50 – Lynn Belanger | \$100 – Diane Carlson |
| \$ 50 – Glen Thompson | \$100 – Matt Albrecht |
| \$100 – Lester Boomgaarden | \$100 – Andrew Hauner |

- | |
|----------------------------|
| \$100 – Ronald Dally |
| \$100 – Leland Hendrickson |
| \$100 – Erine Dvergsten |
| \$250 – Soren Olesen |
| \$500 – Roger Knutson |