

Operation Round Up



helps local programs

The North Star Electric Community Trust Board met on Jan.

8, 2013, to review the 22 Operation Round Up applications, which it received requesting funding for various programs. The total amount requested was more than \$25,000. The board had about \$9,000 to work with, so it was not an easy task selecting which groups would get funding and what amount they would receive.

Many local programs and organizations benefit from Operation Round Up, a voluntary member-driven fundraising program of North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc., that is designed to provide financial assistance for worthwhile projects and charities in the area. Donations are given to organizations to help make the area a more pleasant and safe place to live.

All funds for Operation Round Up are contributed by the member-owners of North Star Electric and the money is put into a trust fund that is separate from electric accounts. The trust is administered by its own

board of directors comprised of people from across the area.

Operation Round Up directors are appointed by North Star's board members and must be members of the cooperative. The cooperative's general manager is a nonvoting member of the board.

Organizations from the area may apply for a donation from the Operation Round Up Trust. The applicant must be charitable in nature and be working to meet a need in our area. The Operation Round Up board meets twice a year and decides if an application meets the guidelines of the trust and if funds are available.

If a member chooses to be part of Operation Round Up, their bill is "rounded up" to the next highest dollar. For example, a bill for \$96.47 is rounded up to \$97. The additional 53 cents will be placed in the trust and distributed to local charitable and community-based programs.

About 80 percent of North Star's members have chosen to participate in Operation Round Up and it is expected that contributions will be about \$18,700 each year. That money goes right back into our community.

The average annual contribution from a member is about \$6. The most that could be contributed in a year by a member is \$11.88 (12 months x 99 cents).

If a member of North Star Electric or a non member of the cooperative would like to make an additional contribution, please give our office a call.



North Star Electric Community Trust Board members, front row: Larry Warrington; Gretchen Thompson, *vice president*; Peter Granger, *president*. **Second row:** Zelpha Crawford; Margie Sporlein, *secretary-treasurer*; Julie Lepisto; and Mary Ellen Lehman.

2013 winners



Front row from left to right: Darlene Larson, *Littlefork Lutheran Quilters*; Chris Jonson, *Pineview Recovery Center*; Naomi Gingerich and Ruth Hartmann, *Moose Creek Quilters*. **Second row:** Mary Ellen Lehman and Larry Warrington, *North Star Electric Community Trust Board*; Marta Lindemanis, *City of Big Falls*; Thomas A. Wagner, *Koochiching Senior Center*; Harvey Lehman, *Oakley Cemetery Association*; and Kale Tippit, *Pineview Recovery Center*.



Front row from left to right: Alvina Lundsten, *Williams Potato Day*; Gretchen Thompson, *North Star Electric Community Trust Board*; Gayle Wicklund, *LSS Senior Nutrition Program*; Jennifer Strohl, *Lake of the Woods Women of Today*. **Second row:** Mike Hirst, *Lake of the Woods Water & Soil*; Liz Tange and Kathy Berggren, *Lake of the Woods School*; Pam Horntvedt, *Lake of the Woods Head Start*; Pat Kempenich, *Lake of the Woods Food Shelf*; and Gerald Levasseur, *Northwest Community Action*.

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e-mail us at nsec@wiktel.com
Visit our website at
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 electric energy and other beneficial services while maintaining the very highest standards of performance.

Highlights from the **BOARDROOM**

These are the highlights from the board of directors' January meeting. In addition to routine business, the board voted to approve the 2013 budget.

Staff reports included the financial report, the 2013 budget, load control, the power plant tour, the new casino planned at the west edge of our service territory, the 2013 Construction Work Plan, outages and blinks caused by ice on the power lines, personnel and the mapping system. Minnkota delegate Arnesen

reported on the cooperative's monthly board meeting, as well as MREA's board 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 Dan Hoskins at least two weeks in advance to be included on the agenda.

ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

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 **call811.com** for more information.



Current electrical inspectors



State law requires that every new electrical installation in any construction, remodeling, replacement or repair shall file a certificate for inspection with the State Board of Electricity and be inspected by a Minnesota electrical inspector.

• St. Louis and Koochiching counties:

Richard Jenko
P.O. Box 523, Buhl, MN 55713
Cell: (218) 258-8338
New hours: Tue., Wed. & Thurs. will take calls from 7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Inspection will be on Tue. and Thurs. only.

• Roseau and Lake of the Woods counties:

Scott Stenvik
16409 State Hwy 1 N.W.
Thief River Falls, MN 56701
Phone: (218) 689-5406
7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)



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Dan Hoskins
General Manager

Manager's Report

Greetings to everyone and I hope your new year has started off the way you would like. Well, we like to say that ours has started off with excited anticipation, some anxiety and a lot of confidence. There is anticipation and excitement for another new year, 2013. It seems like yesterday we sat up all night wondering if the computer age was going to throw something at us when we rolled into the year 2000. Remember that? We anticipate good things with the advancement of some of our people here at North Star, yet we know there is anticipation of that moment when we miss those who have retired or moved on. Yet there is excitement with the new additions of employees who will join our team in providing you with great, reliable electric service.

As your general manager, I feel that part of my job to you is to keep you informed to the best of my ability.

We move into 2013 with some anxiety. Anxiety about political regulations that could be passed by our federal government, our state government, the Environmental Protection Agency or by any other government entity that will affect our cooperative or our G&T, Minnkota. We're also concerned about Minnesota state agencies, mandates, tariffs or any other circumstances that could affect how we deliver our product to

you or how it is generated and could raise the costs. Yet as I look at our employee group, if it is within our grasp, this bunch of folks will have a handle on it and lead with only your best interests in mind!

Now we look at the confidence that our employee group, our management team and our board of directors

have to be able to handle anything. Granted there may and will be issues that set us back on our heels and there will be issues that could make us stumble, but with the determination of our employee group, the foresight of our management team and the battle-tested board of directors that we have, as your manager, I have that confidence to bring you a very successful 2013!

I want to switch gears just a moment. Sometimes when I write an article I get emotional, excited or angry. Sometimes I get up on my soapbox and give you my opinion (everyone has one) on certain issues and then sometimes I get on floor level and try to visit with you and hopefully help you realize or understand what is coming, how it will affect you and what my personal stance is. As your general manager, I feel that part of my job to you is to keep you informed to the best of my ability. And yes, I do get a little emotional when I have to raise your rates for a reason that could have been avoided with some common sense by some of our elected officials or an environmental claim. If I offend you or your beliefs, I do apologize, but I can tell you that my job is watching out for the best interests of approximately 6,000 member-owners and their cooperative and our surrounding communities. So I will do my best to inform all of you what is going on and how it will affect you.

One more thing before I go. This past Christmas, our grandson, Hudson, brought his momma and daddy to our house for Christmas and we had just a joyous time. He liked grandpa's Christmas scenes, especially the train, but the exciting part was watching him open gifts. And as we all sat around, Hudson had in his hand one more package. He went over and sat on grandma's lap and they opened it together and it was a shirt for Hudson and on this shirt read the words "Big Brother!" Stay tuned.

God bless you and our troops, Dan



The value is electric!

One tank of gas for your car

20 gallons at \$3.59/gallon = **\$71.80**

More than 21 days of electricity for your entire home = **\$71.80***

*Based on North Star Electric average residential usage of 875 kWh per month at the residential rate of \$.113/kWh + Minnkota surcharge of \$.003/kWh (Does not include the \$36 basic service fee)



Operation Round Up

helps local programs (continued from page 1)

At the January meeting, \$9,000 in Operation Round Up funds were distributed to various qualifying programs and organizations throughout the area including:

Lake of the Woods Food Shelf – *Food stocking*
LSS Senior Program – *Senior meals*
Roosevelt American Legion – *Dishwasher*
Moose Creek Quilters – *Warm the Body to Warm the Heart*
Sanford Health – *Illness Management*
United Way of NE Minnesota – *Buddy Backpacks*
City of Big Falls – *Campground map/display board*
Littlefork Lutheran Quilters – *Quilting from the Heart*
Lakewood Health Care – *Vein Illumination System*
LOW Water & Soil – *Keep it Clean Task Force*
LOW Elementary School – *School Garden*

LOW School Band – *Instruments*
LOW Head Start – *Yoga/Gym Mats*
LOW Women of Today – *Water Fountain at Arena*
Northwest Community Action – *Reach out for Warmth*
Williams Potato Day – *Potato Day*
Littlefork Fire Dept. – *AED*
Pineview Recovery Center – *Remodeling Project*
Oakley Cemetery Association – *Wheeled Weed Eater*
Koochiching County Senior Center – *Meals on Wheels/Safety*
Kabetogama Fire Department – *Pagers*
Camps of Courage & Friendship – *Scholarship*

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, available at either North Star office or from a director of the North Star Electric Community Trust Board. The directors are Peter Granger, Gretchen Thompson, Margie Sporlein, Zelpha Crawford, Mary Ellen Lehman, Julie Lepisto and Larry Warrington.

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.

How to safely clean up and dispose of broken CFLs

Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) are an affordable and efficient alternative to traditional incandescent light bulbs. CFLs last longer than incandescent bulbs, require a fraction of the cost to use, and lead to fewer carbon dioxide emissions.

CFLs do contain a small amount of mercury. To put it in perspective, you would have to break 100 CFLs to equal the amount of mercury in an old style thermometer, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The level of mercury in a CFL is nothing to fear, but you should handle them with care. When you are done with a CFL, take it to an approved drop-off. Retailers, including many hardware stores, will properly dispose of CFLs if you drop them off.

If you break a CFL, follow these cleanup and disposal procedures:

- Do not vacuum the broken bulb — unless broken glass remains after all other cleanup steps have been taken — because it could spread mercury-containing powder or mercury vapor.
- Have children and pets leave the room.
- Before you start to clean up the broken bulb, shut off the heat or air conditioning to prevent the mercury from circulating. Then open a window, and leave the room for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Using a stiff piece of paper, sweep the broken pieces into

a glass jar with a metal lid. Place the cardboard in a sealable container (jar or plastic bag).

- Use sticky tape, such as duct tape, to clean up the remaining pieces; put the tape in the jar. If the CFL broke on a hard surface, wipe it down with a damp cloth, and place the cloth in the jar or plastic bag.
- If the CFL broke on carpet and you cannot pick up all the pieces, use a vacuum, but dispose of the vacuum cleaner bag when you are done.
- Be sure to place the jar or bag with broken bulb and cleanup materials outside in a trash container or protected area until it can be disposed of properly. Some recycling centers accept CFLs — but not all of them do. The EPA suggests checking with your local and/or state household hazardous waste authority for disposal requirements in your area.
- Keep the heating or air conditioning system off and continue to let the room air out for several hours.

For more information on energy safety and efficiency, visit EnergyEdCouncil.org.



Handle generators with caution and respect

Use portable and standby generators safely

When Hurricane Sandy knocked out power to tens of thousands of homes and businesses on the East Coast this past fall, many turned to portable and standby generators to help keep food safe, the lights on and safety and medical equipment operating so the recovery process could get underway.

Molly Hall, executive director of the Safe Electricity program says, "While generators can be a lifesaver for some and can increase the quality of life after a natural disaster such as a hurricane, earthquake or ice storm, it is critical that proper safety precautions be taken when using a standby or portable generator."

The improper use of a standby or portable generator can lead to injury or death (716-05-009-03, Gilroy G Arvig). When using one, SafeElectricity.org urges you to follow these tips to keep you and your family safe:

- Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator. Be sure you understand them before hooking up the generator.
- Never operate a generator in a confined area, such as a garage. Generators can produce numerous gases, including toxic and deadly carbon monoxide. They require proper ventilation.
- Generators pose electrical risks especially when operated in wet conditions. Use a generator only when necessary when the weather creates wet or moist conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. Always ensure that your hands are dry before touching the generator.
- When you refuel the generator, make sure the engine is cool to prevent a fire, should the tank overflow.
- There should be nothing plugged into the generator

when you turn it on. This prevents a surge from damaging your generator and appliances.

- Be sure to keep children and pets away from the generator, which could burn them.
- Shut down the generator properly. Before shutting down a generator, turn off and unplug all appliances and equipment being powered by the generator.
- Remember maintenance between uses. Inspect the fuel and oil filters, spark plug, oil level and fuel quality. It is also a good idea to start the generator on a regular basis before an emergency situation occurs.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, there was a newer type of generator deployed to help as the recovery began. Solar generators were used in many places that had been darkened by the storm. Solar generators, as you would expect, use solar panels to collect energy from the sun and store that energy in a battery for later use.

Hall says, "While it's true that solar generators are much quieter than gas, diesel or natural gas standby generators and when used properly, don't generate toxic fumes, they must still be handled with caution and respect." Solar generators collect and store large amounts of electricity that, if not handled with the proper precaution, can cause injury or death.

For more information on the safe use of portable and standby generators, go to SafeElectricity.org.



Attention: Parents of high school seniors

Are you aware of North Star Electric's Knowledge Scholarship? To qualify, the parent/guardian must be an active member of North Star Electric, and your child must take a test about your cooperative that provides electricity to your home. North Star Electric will be awarding five scholarships, one \$1,000 and four \$400, plus a chance to win one of eight \$50 cash awards for scoring over 50 percent on the test. Most of the answers will be in the study material that North Star provides. A couple hours of study time could pay off with a \$1,000 scholarship. Last year only 35 students took the test. The information meeting and the test will be given in mid-April. For more information about the scholarships, please call Wayne at North Star Electric or check with your guidance counselor at your school.

GIVE THE GIFT

OF LIFESAVING KNOWLEDGE THIS VALENTINE'S DAY



We show each other how much we care in many different ways. Around Valentine's Day some of the more popular forms include cards, flowers and candy. This Valentine's Day, also consider giving a gift that could save your loved ones' lives — knowledge. Make sure your loved ones know how to stay safe around electricity.

Electricity is essential in our everyday lives. It makes so many of our modern processes and conveniences possible. That is why it is important that we know how to stay safe around it, and **SafeElectricity.org** is an online source for such vital safety information.

On **SafeElectricity.org** you can find valuable information on accident prevention and safety education to keep your loved ones safe. There are a variety of videos, articles and interactive games and activities to help teach everyone about electrical safety.

Each year, a different story is featured in the TLC series of videos. TLC stands for Teach what you know, Learn what you need to, and Care enough to share it. Knowledge is essential in preventing death and injury from electrical sources. Individuals and their families share their stories of personal encounters with electricity to help others avoid tragedy.

Ashley Taylor and Lee Whittaker, two Indiana teens featured in the 2010 TLC video, received invaluable

information at a school presentation just four days before they crashed into a utility pole. Thanks to the presentation, they understood the threat and real danger of downed power lines and stayed in the vehicle until the power was turned off and help arrived.

Discover the importance of having ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) installed inside and outside your home from Caitlyn MacKenzie's family. Learn about staying safe while working outside near power lines from Gary Norland and Shawn Miller. Be sure that you are taking the proper steps to ensure safe digging by watching Tom Dickey's story (241-18-004-

04, Paul D. Pedersen). Find out what you need to know to stay safe when operating large equipment near overhead power lines from Jim Flach's family.

Check out **SafeElectricity.org** to view these stories and learn more about electrical safety. Show your loved ones you care by sharing this vital safety information with them — along with their cards, flowers or candy this Valentine's Day.



Thomas Edison's story illuminates continued research and improvement in electric lighting

Thomas Edison contributed to scientific breakthroughs that affect human life across the world. He is credited as one of the fathers of the modern era. Edison is perhaps most associated with electricity — and the light bulb.

Edison patented more than 1,000 inventions — many were improvements upon existing technology of the time. In fact, while Edison is famous for his work with electric light, he did not actually invent the light bulb. He advanced the light bulb in a way that made it safe, practical and affordable.

Edison's incandescent light bulb remained largely unchanged for more than 100 years. His light bulb was completed in the 1880s, and major changes were not made until 1995. In 1995, the compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) became widely available.

Like Thomas Edison had done with inventors before him, the creators of the CFL kept some of Edison's original design (363-15-006-01, Ronald L. Davis). The major difference was that new CFLs ran much more efficiently and did not waste energy giving off heat.

The introduction of CFLs required

new labels to increase consumer understanding. With incandescent bulbs, the more energy (watts) a light bulb used, the brighter it was. CFLs consume nominal energy regardless of brightness. To address this, the term lumen now designates brightness. The more lumens a bulb has, the brighter it is. A dim bulb is 450 lumens, while a bright one is 1,600 lumens.

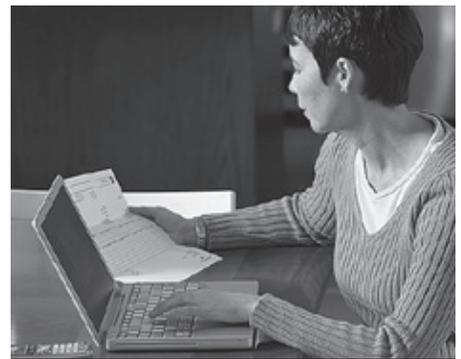
The color quality of CFLs is also a consideration.

Most will come with a Color Index Rating. Light colors range from cool blue, which is appropriate for spaces where you work and read, to warm yellow, which is appropriate for sleeping and living spaces. Light-Emitting Diode (LED) bulbs are even more efficient and use the same lumen and Color Index Rating.

Through

continuing research and development, Edison's light bulbs are changing. The modern research laboratory itself was one of Edison's other great inventions. His laboratory provided an environment for great minds to share materials and work on multiple projects at once — as they develop new ideas and improve upon the technologies of the day.

To learn more about energy efficiency and electrical safety, visit EnergyEdCouncil.org.



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.

1213 SE 2nd Ave.
Grand Rapids, MN 55744-3984
800-422-0312

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

702 3rd Ave. S.
Virginia, MN 55792-2797
800-662-5711

North Star Electric continues to donate unclaimed capital credits



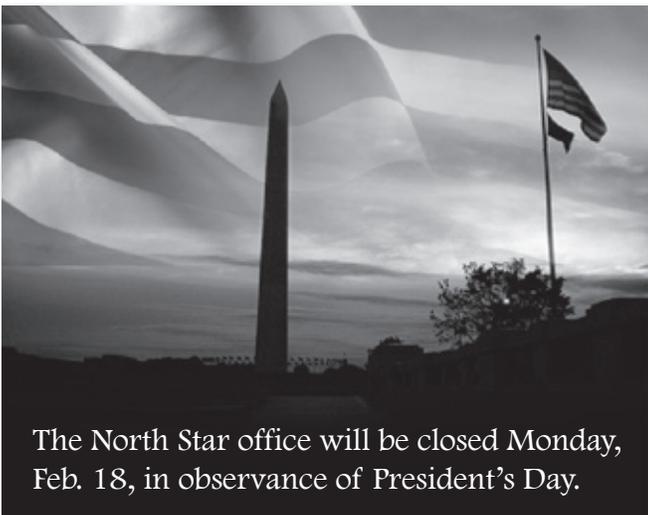
Carol Burmeister, board member of the Big Falls CERC, receives a check from Lorraine Nygaard, board member from District 6.



Bill Glawe, commander of the Big Falls Legion, receives a check from Lorraine Nygaard, board member from District 6.



Rusty Lehto, Kabetogama EMTs; Niles Wilkens, Kabetogama Fire Department; Julian Brzoznowski, board member from District 7; and Ellen Hart, Kabetogama EMTs.



The North Star office will be closed Monday, Feb. 18, in observance of President's Day.



Karen Baird, representing the Big Falls Lions Club, receives a check from Lorraine Nygaard, board member from District 6.