

## THANK A LINEMAN!

North Star Electric Cooperative is proud of our linemen and would like for everyone to take this opportunity to shake the hand of one of our linemen, give them a pat on the back or just extend a nice thank you greeting.

### Our linemen:



**THANK YOU  
FOR POWERING  
OUR LIVES.**

**NATIONAL  
LINEMAN  
APPRECIATION  
DAY**

**APRIL 10, 2017**

**#ThankALineman**



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**Baudette linemen (left photo):** Darren Koschak, *lead lineman*; Cody Stuhaug, *apprentice lineman*; Todd Higgins, *line sub-foreman*; Tim Pelach, *line foreman*; Jesse Huot, *journeyman lineman*.

**Littlefork linemen (right photo):** Front row – Todd Thydean, *line sub-foreman*; Preston Kennedy, *lead lineman*. Second row – Nathan Zortman, *journeyman lineman*; Bruce Petersen, *line foreman*; Nick Horne, *apprentice lineman*.

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MARCH 2017

The Enlightener (USPS 024959), Vol. 62, No. 3 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

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Visit our website at  
[www.northstarelectric.coop](http://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' Feb. 8, 2017, meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine motions, the board voted to appoint Steve Arnesen as the Minnkota representative and Mike Hanson as the Square Butte representative on the respective boards of directors, to approve the allocation of the 2016 margins (revenue in excess of expenses) to the cooperative members' capital credit accounts and to approve the transfer of final unpaid bills to collection.

Visiting guests from Minnkota Power Cooperative included President & CEO Mac McLennan and Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Lowell Stave. Mr. McLennan and Mr. Stave held an in-depth discussion with the directors about the challenges, risks and plans for Minnkota's future to continue to provide reliable and affordable electricity to North Star Electric Cooperative and the other 10 rural electric cooperative member-owners of Minnkota Power Cooperative.

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](http://www.facebook.com/NorthStarElectric) for outage updates during winter storms and other useful information.

## Capital credit allocation



Your March bill will show your share of the 2016 margins (revenue in excess of expenses) and your accumulated capital credit balance. Because North Star Electric Cooperative is nonprofit and owned by those who purchase electricity from it, all margins are returned to you and the other members. Current margins are temporarily held in your capital credit account, which is your share of the ownership of the cooperative's assets. Over time, these capital credits are repaid to the members. Payment or bill credit are typically made in September. We have returned \$11,357,268 of capital credits to our members.





**Ann Ellis**  
General Manager

# MANAGER'S REPORT

**B**y the time you receive this, it will almost be the first day of SPRING ... at least according to the calendar! I remember when I was about 10 and my mom had made me a pink and gray sleeveless dress. I waited for spring to come to wear it, and when I emerged from my bedroom wearing it on the first day of spring, mom pointed out the temperature on the thermometer outside the window and sent me back to make a better choice.

Life is about choices. Some are easy to make. Others not so much.

One of the difficult ones at your cooperative is choosing where your future electricity will come from. Ten years ago almost all your electricity came from coal, and a small amount was hydro. Today, wind power has emerged and is 34 percent of Minnkota Power Cooperative's generation capacity, hydro is 9 percent and the rest is reliable, and cleaner, coal. I can tell you that the Minnkota board of directors, which includes a representative from North Star's board, as well as representatives from each of the other 10 rural electric cooperative member-owners of Minnkota, has been diligently studying to make the right choices in an environment of considerable uncertainty.

Choices are also made every fall at your annual meeting.

This is when everyone who buys electricity from North Star is encouraged to attend and elect your representative to North Star Electric Cooperative's seven-member board of directors. Your director brings your concerns to the boardroom, the board makes decisions that are based on local needs and they regulate your business with effective, commonsense policy.

Another choice is to either get involved or 'assume' someone else will take care of things the way you would choose. I'm headed in the direction of grassroots involvement. Do you know how FEW people take the time to contact their elected representatives, but how EFFECTIVE those calls from constituents are? I'd like to thank our group of grassroots members and invite you all to take an active role in shaping your future. To be put on our grassroots email list, just send me a quick note ([annnsec@wiktel.com](mailto:annnsec@wiktel.com)). We typically send only a couple of emails each year, and taking action is totally up to you.

Let's end with a very easy choice – to recognize our electrical line workers and their supporting counterparts as National Lineman Appreciation Day approaches on April 10. We have 10 dedicated linemen who keep 1,437 miles of power line energized at 6,473 services 99.96 percent of the time. Hats off to the heroes who are there for you 365 days a year to keep the lights on!

At your service we remain, Ann

## THANK A LINEMAN!

(continued from page 1)

### The Lineman

*What are their thoughts, these hardy souls, hanging by a belt on top of poles, doing a job few would do, what are their thoughts, this gallant crew?*

*They risk their lives the whole day through, gaffed to a pole, these men of few,*

*They battle the elements from summer heat to winter snow, Fulfilling orders from afar and below?*

*These men of brawn who hum a song, also joke and swear to get along, knowing their life is probably, only a rubber glove from eternity?*

*At the close of day, as they climb down the pole and put their hooks away? They thank God for their safe ability, to be able to return home to their family.*

*Then as they walk thru their door to greet their kids and their wife, Today they know, they turned darkness into light.*

*And one last thing before we end; God said, "let there be light," then he created linemen!*



## Minnkota evaluating feasibility of carbon capture project

Minnkota Power Cooperative, North Star Electric's wholesale power provider, continues to evaluate the feasibility of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) capture technology on Unit 2 of the Milton R. Young Station, a coal-based power plant located near Center, N.D. Known as Project Tundra, the effort aims to capture the CO<sub>2</sub> on site and transport it by pipeline to the nearby oil fields where it can be used for enhanced oil recovery (444-36-001-02, Viola Mellun). This process has the potential to substantially increase each well's production compared to conventional drilling practices. Minnkota is working with state and federal lawmakers to prioritize research and development funding for efforts like Project Tundra and other advanced energy technologies.

# Driving: 'Our complacency is killing us'

U.S. motor vehicle deaths in 2016 are expected to be the highest in nine years.

For the first time in nearly a decade, preliminary data from the National Safety Council estimates that as many as 40,000 people died in motor vehicle crashes in 2016. That marks a 6 percent increase over 2015 and a 14 percent increase over 2014 – the most dramatic two-year escalation in 53 years.

An estimated 4.6 million roadway users were injured seriously enough to require medical attention, a 7 percent increase over 2015. This means 2016 may have been the deadliest year on the roads since 2007. The estimated cost to society caused by these motor vehicle crashes was \$432 billion.

An NSC survey released Feb. 15 provides a glimpse at the risky things drivers are doing. Although 83 percent of drivers surveyed believe driving is a safety concern, a startling number say they are comfortable speeding (64 percent), texting either manually or through voice controls (47 percent), driving while impaired by marijuana (13 percent) or driving after they feel they've had too much alcohol (10 percent).

"Our complacency is killing us. Americans believe there is nothing we can do to stop crashes from happening, but that isn't true," said NSC President and CEO Deborah A.P. Hersman. "The U.S. lags the rest of the developed world in addressing highway fatalities. We know what needs to be done; we just haven't done it."

NSC is calling for immediate implementation of life-saving measures that would set the nation on a road to zero deaths:

- Mandate ignition interlocks for convicted drunk drivers and better education about the nature of impairment and when it begins;
- Install and use automated enforcement techniques to catch speeders;
- Extend laws banning all cellphone use – including hands-free – to all drivers, not just teens; upgrade enforcement from secondary to primary in states with existing bans;
- Upgrade seat belt laws from secondary to primary enforcement and extend restraint laws to every passenger in every seating position in all kinds of vehicles;

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## Staff Report

Have you ever noticed the random names and account numbers listed in the *Enlightener*? Like this one (121-

20-007-01, Joseph Lund)?

Hopefully, you haven't

been in the dark and you know that these names have been drawn as

winners of a \$20 electric bill

credit, IF they contact us to tell us they've seen their name in the *Enlightener*. Reading the *Enlightener* and being informed can truly be a win-win situation for three lucky members each month!

Recently we had a giveaway on our Facebook page, where we gave away a thermos, mug, flashlight and hat. Because we want to keep the lines of communication open with our members, we seek to engage more members through social media. And boy, this giveaway did just that! With this giveaway, we had another 350 people "like" our Facebook page, another 630 people shared our Facebook post, and according to Facebook data, this particular post reached almost 40,000 people. For members who want to be engaged, Facebook is where you will find the most recent, up-to-date information we have to offer.



At the end of February, we had a drawing for all registered users of MyMeter. One winner received a \$100 energy bill credit, and another winner won a \$100

Visa gift card (courtesy of the folks at MyMeter). If you've never checked it out, MyMeter is an online tool we offer which enables you to view, compare and manage your energy usage. You can spot trends, track your usage and even receive energy-related alerts. It's your energy, and we want you to make the most of it.

At our annual meeting held each fall, attending members are registered to win energy credits for their electric bills. Last year, we gave away a total of \$2,000 in energy credits, which included one \$500 grand prize winner. At our spring member appreciation open house events in both Littlefork and Baudette, we offer prizes as well.

To sum this up, being an engaged member can literally pay off! We appreciate your communications with us, and continually work to interact with more members in different ways. And occasionally, you might receive a reward for just that!



**Robyn Sonstegard**  
Manager of Finance & Administration



## 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 <b>\$3.15</b> per month	Equals <b>\$0.47</b> per month
Savings per bulb per month with LED = <b>\$2.68</b>	
Cost of LED bulb after rebate = <b>\$4</b> (at either North Star Electric office)	

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.



## ATTENTION Parents of high school seniors

Are you aware of North Star Electric Co-op's Knowledge Scholarship? To qualify, the parent/guardian must be an active member of North Star Electric Co-op, and your student must take a test about your cooperative that provides electricity to your home. North Star Electric Co-op will award five scholarships, one \$1,000 and four \$400, plus a chance to win one of eight \$100 cash awards for scoring more than 60 percent on the test. Most of the answers will be in the six pages of study material that North Star provides. A couple of hours of study time could pay off with a \$1,000 scholarship. Last year only 25 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 Co-op or check with the guidance counselor at your school.

## State law requires a carbon monoxide detector near every bedroom of your home

Each year, more than 200 Americans die and several thousand individuals are treated in emergency rooms for CO poisoning. The risk of CO poisoning increases during the winter, as more people run furnaces, gas space heaters and use fireplaces.



Remember – Minnesota law requires CO detectors within 10 feet of every sleeping room in all existing single-family homes. If you haven't installed a detector yet, please don't wait. Lives may depend on it.

For more information go to: [www.dps.state.mn.us/fmarshal/PublicEducation](http://www.dps.state.mn.us/fmarshal/PublicEducation) or call the State Fire Marshal's office at 1-651-201-7200.



# ATTENTION TEACHERS:

*Earn two graduate credits by attending free seminar*

Registration is now open for the Lignite Energy Council's 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Teacher Education Seminar: Energy, Economics and Environment. The four-day seminar gives teachers a first-hand look at lignite mining and related energy production. The seminar will be held June 12-15, 2017, at Bismarck State College's National Energy Center of Excellence, Bismarck, N.D. **Teachers from all grade and subject levels should apply before April 15, 2017.**

Two professional development graduate credits are available in economics through the University of North



Dakota, science through Minot State University or education through North Dakota State University. To receive the credits, teachers must attend all portions of the seminar and prepare a lesson plan demonstrating how they could use the seminar information and materials in their classroom. The two graduate credits are paid for by the Lignite Energy Council. Free lodging and meals are provided. Mileage reimbursement is also available.

The seminar will provide teachers with the information and educational materials they need to teach their students about how lignite is mined and used to produce electricity for homes, farms and businesses in the Upper Midwest. In addition, the seminar covers lignite's economic impact on the region, as well as important environmental issues affecting the lignite industry (303-28-002-04, Greg Mortenson). A tour of a mine, power plant and the Great Plains Synfuels plant are included as part of the seminar.

For more information and an online application go to [www.lignite.com/teachers](http://www.lignite.com/teachers).

## Operation Round Up<sup>®</sup> application deadline is May



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

members. The directors are Gretchen Thompson, Margie Sporlein, Zelfa 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.

## Fixing up your home? We can help.

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!



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



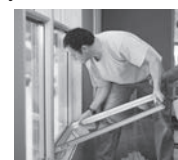
For additional information:  
[www.borderstatebank.com](http://www.borderstatebank.com)

**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



# Driving: 'Our complacency is killing us'

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- Adopt a three-tiered licensing system for all new drivers under 21 – not just those under 18;
- Standardize and accelerate into the fleet automotive safety technologies with life-saving potential, including blind-spot monitoring, automatic emergency braking, lane departure warning and adaptive headlights;
- Pass or reinstate motorcycle helmet laws;
- Adopt comprehensive programs for pedestrian safety.

Whether the National Safety Council is successful in advocating for these

traffic safety measures or not, preventing fatalities on the road starts and ends with you:

- Avoid distractions: Don't text or talk on the phone when driving; avoid other behaviors in the vehicle that distract you;
- Don't drive if you are under the influence of any type of alcohol or drug. Prevent those you care about from driving in such conditions too;
- Don't drive if you are fatigued or suffering from illness that makes focusing on the task of driving difficult;
- Wear your seat belt, and demand that all your passengers buckle up too;
- Wear helmets when operating or riding on motorcycles;
- Keep your vehicle properly maintained;
- Slow down. Speeding is a factor in most fatal crashes;
- Plan ahead. Consider weather, road construction and traffic when planning routes.



## 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 877-687-1163  
Direct 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 Donald Trump

The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500  
www.whitehouse.gov  
president@whitehouse.gov  
202-456-1111

#### Senator Al Franken

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

#### Senator Amy Klobuchar

302 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
www.klobuchar.senate.gov  
202-224-3244  
1-888-224-9043 (Minnesota office)  
Fax: 202-228-2186

#### Congressman Rick Nolan

2366 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
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#### Congressman Collin Peterson

2204 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
www.collinpeterson.house.gov  
202-225-2165  
Fax: 202-225-1593

### State of Minnesota legislators

#### Governor Mark Dayton

Capitol Building, Room 130  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
800-657-3717  
mark.dayton@state.mn.us

#### Senator Tom Bakk

2221 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
95 University Avenue W.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-8881  
Email: Use mail form

#### Senator Paul Utke

3403 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
95 University Avenue W.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-9651  
sen.paul.utke@senate.mn

#### Senator Mark Johnson

2105 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
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St. Paul, MN 55155  
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#### Representative Dan Fabian

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100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
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888-727-0979  
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



# Ways to save energy & money

*Save some green by going green. The Energy Education Council provides a checklist for those who want to make their home a green one with no cost, low cost and higher cost options.*



There are many ways to make your home more efficient that do not cost a dime:

- Turn off lights when you leave a room.
- Set ceiling fans to rotate clockwise in cold months and counterclockwise in warmer months.
- During the winter, open up curtains on sunny days to let the warm sunlight in. At night, make sure to close the curtains. In the summer, keep your curtains closed.
- Set your water heater temperature to no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- When cooking, match the pot size to the burner size. Also, do not unnecessarily open the door to the oven while cooking or baking. Heat escapes, and the oven will have to reheat.
- For laundry, wash clothes in cold water. Hang clothes to dry when you can.
- Only start the washing machine or the dishwasher when loads are full.
- Turn off electronics and unplug chargers when they are not in use.

Here are some low cost ways to boost your home's efficiency that will quickly pay for themselves:

- Replace old incandescent light bulbs with more efficient and longer-lasting LED bulbs.
- Install a programmable thermostat to make automatic changes to your home's temperature.
- Invest in low-flow showerheads to save water.
- Fix leaky faucets.
- Replace furnace and air conditioning filters on a monthly basis.
- Caulk cracks between windows/doors and walls.
- Purchase an insulating blanket to use on your hot water heater.
- Install motion sensors, dimmers, and timers for indoor and outdoor lighting.
- Plant trees to shelter your home from the elements.

Here are some suggestions that cost more upfront, but will pay for themselves over time:

- Upgrade an older furnace, HVAC system, water heater and other large appliances to updated high-efficiency models.
- Invest in double-pane windows with low e-coating to reflect thermal radiation.
- Upgrade insulation in the attic, exterior walls, basement and crawl spaces.