

ALL IN THE FAMILY

*Four Huots, four
different co-ops in
Minnkota system*

Her three sons – Travis, Jesse and Adam – are electric cooperative line workers in the region. If the lights go out, working day and night in treacherous conditions is just part of the job.

“I’m very proud as a parent to have linemen,” Leslie said. “It’s a dangerous profession, but it’s a good profession.”

Leslie knows firsthand the importance of what her

(article continued on page 8)

In the middle of the night when storms rage through northwest Minnesota, Leslie Huot can’t help but worry.

Operation Round Up® helps local programs

The North Star Community Trust Board met Jan. 9 to review the 18 applications they received requesting funding for various programs. The total amount requested was more than \$27,000. The board had about \$12,000 to work with, so it was not an easy task selecting which group would get funding and what amount they would receive.

Many local programs and organizations benefit from Operation Round Up®, a voluntary member-driven fundraising

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NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COMMUNITY TRUST BOARD MEMBERS

Front row (from left to right): Zelpha L. Crawford, District 4, Loman; Tony Radniecki, District 1; Roosevelt; Mary Ellen Lehman, vice president, District 5, Littlefork. **Second row:** Gretchen Thompson, president, District 2, Baudette; Julie Lepisto, District 6, Big Falls; Margie Sporlein, secretary/treasurer, District 3, Williams; Larry Warrington, District 7, Kabetogama.

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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' Dec. 6, 2017, board meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine motions, the board voted to approve the new Wholesale-Cost-Plus Industrial and Large Power retail rate, to approve the Director Fees and Reimbursements policy, to approve the audit report presented at the November board meeting and to approve Manager Ellis' out-of-state travel to Washington, D.C.

Staff reports included the financial report, a presentation of the 2018 budget, which includes no increase to the monthly service fee or the price per kWh, employee training for metering and mapping, ripple voltage testing, winter load control testing, Conservation Improvement Plan (CIP) rebates, Operation Round Up, the 2018 member power plant tour, Norris

Camp, contracted meter testing, the safety report and no lost time hours accumulated.

Darrick Moe, president and CEO of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), was also a guest at the meeting. Mr. Moe discussed the statewide organization and a variety of topics, including legislation, safety and education.

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

Detailed minutes are available at the cooperative for member review. Regular board meetings are generally held the first Wednesday of every month. If you wish to speak with the board, or have an item that you would like to have placed on the agenda, please contact Manager Ann Ellis at least two weeks in advance to be included on the agenda.

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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.



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!



For additional information:
www.borderstatebank.com

Anna Stewart NMLS# 1003973
Roseau - 463-3888
Christine Modahl NMLS# 530663
Badger - 528-3255
Lisa Bergsnev NMLS# 504770
Greenbush - 782-2151



Stuart McFarlane NMLS# 677574
Paul LaPlante NMLS# 677575
463-2135



Ann Ellis
General Manager

MANAGER'S REPORT

Fish fry fundraiser

The local electrical line worker students are teaming up with the M-State Foundation for their seventh annual fundraiser to support future students at the Baudette facility. If you like a traditional walleye fish fry, or just want to help the cause, don't forget about the Holes for Poles event from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Baudette American Legion on Saturday, Feb. 10. Prizes are WAY too numerous to mention, but if you are a sportsman of any kind, you'll appreciate the variety and quality, like a guided pheasant hunt, open-water fishing on Lake of the Woods compliments of Cyrus Resort, an ION electric ice auger and more! We hope to see you there!

Sneak peek - scholarship test

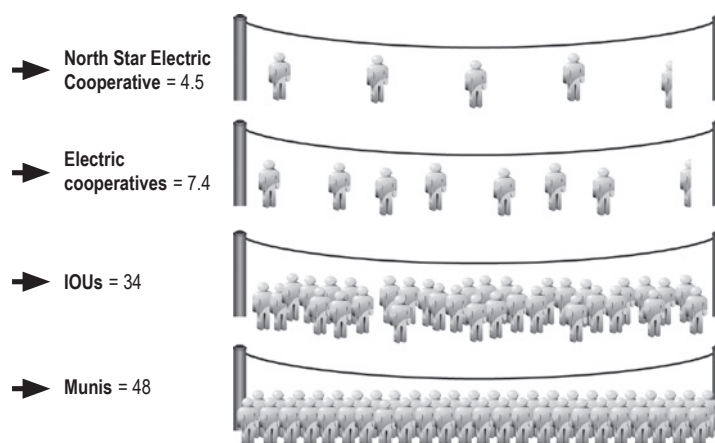
This month's "Sneak Peek" question on North Star Electric Cooperative's annual scholarship test for members' high school seniors is:

Question: How many miles of power lines do North Star Electric Cooperative members own and maintain?

Answer: 1,437 miles

A challenge that is shared by most rural electric cooperatives, like North Star, is dealing with the low density of electric services. North Star's average is just 4.5 services per mile of power line. If we had higher density,

Average number of consumers per mile of line



like municipalities and IOUs (investor owned utilities), we would charge a much lower monthly basic service fee, but I don't see much of a change in how concentrated our membership will become (393-26-001-05, Kent Benike). In the meantime, our 10 linemen take conscientious care of the 1,437 miles of electric distribution line and equipment that reliably deliver powerful value for you every day.

No rate increase

With increased sales due to a combination of weather returning to normal and propane prices rising, we are pleased to announce that no retail rate increase is planned anytime soon. In fact, Minnkota's recent long-term projection for wholesale power costs looks very stable, meaning they don't plan to raise rates for the next four years, and that is great news in which to close.

At your service we remain, *Ann*

ATTENTION TEACHERS:

Earn two graduate credits by attending free seminar

2018 LIGNITE EDUCATION SEMINAR
JUNE 11-14
BISMARCK STATE COLLEGE

Learn about the lignite coal industry and the important role it plays in providing electricity to the Midwest!

- ✓ **2 FREE** PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDITS
- ✓ TOUR A LIGNITE COAL MINE AND POWER PLANT
- ✓ RECEIVE TEACHING MATERIALS FOR THE CLASSROOM

www.lignite.com/teachers

Registration is now open for the **Lignite Energy Council's 33rd 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 11-14, 2018**, at Bismarck State College's National Energy Center of Excellence, Bismarck, N.D. Teachers

(continued on page 6)

When winter winds howl, power lines can gallop

Severe weather with strong winds can cause damage to trees, buildings and electrical equipment (785-21-005-01, Doug Phalen). While power lines can sway in high winds, add freezing rain or icy conditions and the result can be galloping power lines.

Galloping is the bouncing or bucking movement of overhead lines and can cause several problems, from temporary power interruptions to equipment damage, the collapse of power poles and downed lines.

Galloping lines often result from ice buildup on one side of the power line due to strong winds. The buildup of ice creates an airfoil, which changes the flow of air around the line, causing bouncing wires, or galloping power lines.

There isn't much utility workers can do until the wind dies down. That's why many power lines have objects, like twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal attached to the line. These help reduce galloping of lines and prevent potential danger.

If you see galloping power lines:

- Keep your distance - ice can break off or power lines can break loose.
- Contact your utility to make it aware of the potential damage as soon as possible.

If you see a downed line:



- Stay far away and warn others to stay away too.
- Remember, a downed line can remain energized even if it is not sparking or arcing.
- Always report the location of a downed power line and damaged electrical equipment.

Be sure to have a storm preparedness kit ready before a storm strikes to help get you and your family through a power outage. This kit should include bottled water, nonperishable food, blankets, warm clothing, first aid kit/medicine, flashlight, radio, extra batteries and toiletries.

To learn more about storm and outage safety, visit 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 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 study material that North Star provides. A couple of hours of study time could pay off with a \$1,000 scholarship. Last year only 27 students took the test. The information meeting and the test will be given in early April. For more information about the scholarships, please call Wayne at North Star Electric or check with your guidance counselor at your school.

Operation Round Up helps local programs (continued from page 1)

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, if a bill is \$96.47, the computer will round up the bill 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 nonmember of the cooperative would like to make an additional contribution, please give our office a call.

January 2018 recipients



Seated: Gordy Olson, Lakewood Care Center resident. **Front row (from left to right):** Cathy Christensen, Lakewood Care Center Resident Council; Aris Gubrud, Wabanica Church Quilters; Margie Sporlein, North Star Electric Community Trust Board; Karla Robida, Williams Youth Recreation Association. **Second row:** Louise Schreiner, Williams Senior Citizens Day Center; Susan Jochim, Lake of the Woods Food Shelf; Ann Ellis, North Star Electric Cooperative general manager. **Back row:** Chris Pieper, LSS Senior Nutrition Program.



Front row (from left to right): Julie Lepisto, North Star Electric Community Trust Board; Pat Bjorum, Servants of Shelter Koochiching County; Kay Arnold, Northland Art Society; Mary Ellen Lehman, North Star Electric Community Trust Board; Ann Ellis, North Star Electric Cooperative general manager. **Second row:** Eric Norstad, International Falls School Trap Team; Jeff Hardwig, Polar Polers Ski Club; Karina McLellan, Falls Hunger Coalition.

At the January meeting \$9,650 in Operation Round Up funds were distributed to various qualifying programs and organizations throughout the area, including:





Lake of the Woods Food Shelf Wintering the hungry
Falls Hunger Coalition Senior Select
Servants of Shelter Koochiching County Fire safe ladder for second story unit
International Falls School Trap Team Team uniforms
Kabetogama EMS Helicopter pad
LSS Senior Nutrition Program Health meals for frail/low income
Williams Senior Citizens Day Center Feeding senior citizens
United Way of NE Minnesota (Koochiching) Imagination Library

Warroad Area Community Center Upgrade freezer and dishwasher
Williams Senior Citizens Day Center New freezer
Lake of the Woods Slipper Quilt Guild Quilts for swing bed patients
Wabanica Church Quilters Providing quilts for people in need
Lakewood Care Center Residents Music for residents
Northland Art Society New members recruitment
Williams Youth Recreation Association Williams playground project
Baudette Depot Learning and teaching video material
Polar Polers Ski Club Bogwalk

Understanding light labeling

Labels on light bulb packages provide detail on how much you can expect to pay annually for light bulbs and have information on the brightness and color of the light bulbs.

Lumens, not watts, are key to picking a bulb that is the right brightness. Although watts are listed on incandescent bulbs, watts are not an effective measure of brightness. Watts represent the units of power that it takes to light a bulb, whereas lumens measure the amount of light produced. The more lumens a bulb has, the brighter the bulb will be. The following comparisons outline the lumen measurement to look for that will produce the brightness previously gauged by the wattage use of older style incandescent bulbs:

450 lumens		40W
800 lumens		60W
1100 lumens		75W
1600 lumens		100W

Lighting labels also have information

about the color of a light, ranging from cool to warm. Cool lights, which correspond with higher Kelvin temperatures, are better for visual tasks because they increase contrast. Warm lights, which correspond to lower Kelvin temperatures, are preferable for living spaces because they are more flattering (251-36-110-04, Bill Brandt). When you are shopping for light bulbs, find the spectrum on the package that shows how warm or cool the bulbs are.

Visit EnergyEdCouncil.org for more information.



Different Colors, Same Brightness



ATTENTION TEACHERS:

Earn two graduate credits by attending free seminar

(continued from page 3)

from all grade and subject levels should apply **before April 13.**

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. 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 <http://www.lignite.com/teachers>.



LED lighting rebate form



ENERGY STAR® bulbs highly recommended

(Rebates will not exceed 50 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: _____



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 877-687-1163
Direct 218-999-0800
Fax 218-999-0220

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

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

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 12.2 cents/kWh + 6.875% sales tax	At 12.2 cents/kWh + 6.875% sales tax
Equals \$3.23 per month	Equals \$0.48 per month
Savings per bulb per month with LED = \$2.75	
Cost of LED bulb after rebate = \$4 (at either North Star Electric Cooperative 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.

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) and go to the electrical page.

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

Curt Collier (cgcollider67@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:

Bryan Holmes
Phone: (218) 686-1413
Call to set up an appointment between 7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Mon. thru Fri.)

ALL IN THE FAMILY

(article continued from page 1)

sons do for a living. She's worked the phone lines at Beltrami Electric Cooperative in Bemidji, Minn., for the last 17 years. Having line workers as sons helps her answer questions and relay information out to the membership.

"I feel I have a better understanding of the linemen I work with," Leslie said. "When they get called out on storm jobs, I know what they're going to be doing, because my boys do the same thing."

While it is rare to have four immediate family members working for electric cooperatives, it is even more rare that each works for a cooperative in the Minnkota system. Travis is the line foreman at Clearwater-Polk Electric Cooperative in Bagley, Minn.; Jesse is a journeyman lineman at North Star Electric Cooperative in Baudette, Minn.; and Adam is an apprentice lineman based out of Red River Valley Cooperative Power Association's outpost office in Moorhead, Minn.

The Huots were initially drawn to cooperatives because of the rural setting and their reputation of having a family atmosphere. They haven't been disappointed.

Growing up

Leslie and her husband, Mark, say there were no clear-cut signs that they were raising three future line workers. But when the family moved to Bemidji from western North Dakota in 1994, the tall trees in the area provided a perfect training ground for pole climbing. In fact, on their first day in town, Jesse climbed so high he needed a ladder to get down.

"They were always climbing trees," Leslie said. "They couldn't stand to stay inside. So we knew they probably weren't going to like sitting in an office someday."

Even electrician work included too much time inside for Jesse, 30, who was the first in the family to enter the line trade. After sharing stories of a typical day on the job, his brothers followed the same career path.

As much as Jesse enjoys the fresh air and open spaces, the camaraderie on his crew may be his favorite part.

"You pretty much live with each other," Jesse said. "A lot of other jobs, people come and go. When you get into a cooperative, people don't leave too often."

With a younger line crew at North Star Electric, he believes there

is chance for his guys to be together for many years to come. Working on power lines in remote areas means everyone has to trust each other, he said. "A guy might get ticked off here or there, but at the end of the day you gotta be buddies," Jesse said.

Adrenaline rush

From one brother to the next, the Huots admit they are drawn to the adrenaline rush of line work and the satisfaction of doing something that makes a difference in people's lives. One of the career highlights for the brothers is working together on a storm project near Bagley. Each of the Minnkota cooperatives routinely reach out to help each other when Mother Nature strikes.

"We'll have outages when we're working nonstop for days on end," said Travis, 31. "When you turn the power back on and they're appreciative, it makes a guy feel pretty good."

Jesse is not the only employee at North Star who has other relatives who work for other electric cooperatives. Tim Pelach, line foreman in Baudette, has a son, Jake, who is a lineman working for Lake Country Power in Cook, Minn., and Glen Marcotte, line subforeman in Littlefork, has a twin brother, Joe, who is a line foreman working for PKM Electric Cooperative in Warren, Minn.



Brothers Travis (Clearwater-Polk Electric), Adam (Red River Valley Co-op Power) and Jesse (North Star Electric) are line workers for cooperatives in the Minnkota system.

Off-peak system testing



Kevin Holen
North Star Electric



Gene Roller
Miller Electric

We have been testing our off-peak equipment through our metering system at members' homes and businesses. This will help us locate systems that may not be controlling the electric heating loads properly. North Star's electrician Kevin Holen has been testing off-peak systems and will continue to do

so. We have also contracted out some of the off-peak testing with Miller Electric from Warren, Minn. The electrician that will be testing the systems for Miller Electric is Gene Roller. If you have any questions about the testing please give us a call at 888-634-2202.