

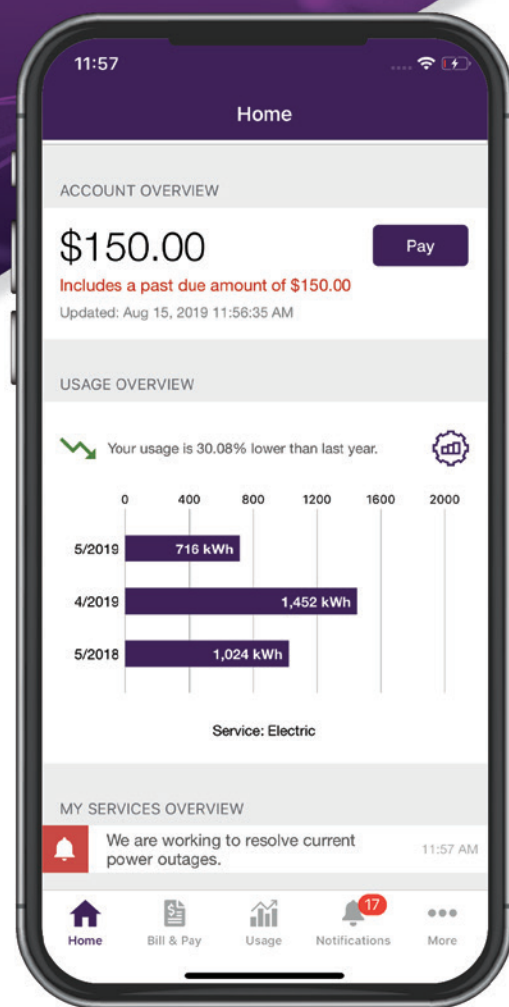
**HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS  
HAVE ACCESS TO \$3,400**  
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**BACON JALAPENO  
CHEESE BALL RECIPE**  
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- Daily usage alerts
- Access your bill
- See us on Facebook (even if you don't have a Facebook account)
- See more on page 4



SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMART HUB.

## 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.



**Ann Ellis**  
General Manager

## MANAGER'S REPORT – TECHNOLOGY

### 40 years ago ...

Rotary phones started to disappear and the size of the computers was enormous. At our office, data was punched into 96-column IBM punch cards, each card "storing" just 64 bytes of data (121-41-059-50, David Kleven). Stacks of these cards were taken across town to Rowell Labs to feed into their IBM system so electric bills could be calculated and printed.

### 20 years ago ...

We prepared for Y2K. With such limited data storage capabilities in the earlier years, every space had been precious. Only two spaces had been allotted for the year, and when the new year would be 2000, there were fears of blackouts and other consequences when computers started subtracting 99 from 00.

### Today ...

A grid-connected toothbrush may hold more data than those early computers. Technology is everywhere, and we'd like to encourage you to **download our SmartHub app** because:

- **SEASONAL accounts will finally be able to monitor their daily usage from anywhere in the world!** This will be a very valuable home and electric bill monitoring tool.
- Members can set up text and/or email alerts to be received if their usage isn't what they are expecting.
- You may find it helpful to see your electricity consumption for every hour

to help determine which hours of certain days have the most impact on the size of your bill.

- You can download the app or see all of SmartHub's capabilities on the internet. North Star's website ([www.nse.coop](http://www.nse.coop)) has a "Pay My Bill" link near the bottom of the page. That will get you started.
- Our YouTube channel has some instructional videos to walk you through the process. Find it on the LINKS tab of our website.
- Once you're set up, the app is a really easy way to do things like:
  - o See your billing statement
  - o See your real-time balance due
  - o Make a payment
  - o Monitor your electric usage per hour, per day or per month
  - o See our Facebook page
  - o Open an issue of the Enlightener
  - o See the outage reporting number
  - o Check out the legislative priorities we are working on
  - o Send us an email
  - o Call us
  - o Go paperless



If you have ANY questions, we will answer them or help you set up SmartHub.

Many of the SmartHub features require the new meter technology. Our project to exchange all of our meters was over 86% complete as of 12/30/2019.

If you are an off-peak member and only your outside main meter has been changed, please call us to set up an appointment to change out your off-peak meter.

• We'd like to encourage you to download our SmartHub app.

• Monitor your daily usage from anywhere in the world.

• If you are an off-peak member and only your outside main meter has been changed, please call us to set up an appointment.

### 2040?

Much will change over the next 20 years, and my expectation is that North Star Electric Cooperative will continue to explore and offer the best energy-related programs available, deliver them at cost and never lose the passion to improve the lives of all of our member-consumers, as well as sustain the vitality of our local communities. May the new decade now dawning be one of prosperity, safety and joy for you and your loved ones.

At your service we remain ...  
Ann



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Are you using your fireplace efficiently? Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire, and close the damper when a fire is not burning.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BOARDROOM



*One of the board's fiduciary duties is to review the cooperative's financials. In addition to the annual report from the auditors and the monthly financial reports from management, the board invites one of its lenders, NRUCFC (National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation), to compare North Star Electric Cooperative's financial ratios with our peers. Shown here with the board is NRUCFC's Alison Deelstra, who also added a segment to share the top strategic goals of rural electric cooperatives across the nation, as well as challenges and trends in ratemaking.*

These are the highlights from the Nov. 6, 2019, board meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine actions, the board voted to accept the audit report, to approve a rural economic development loan from North Star's Revolving Loan Fund to Jake's Sawmill Products, to approve the review and updates to several policies, to approve delegates and committee appointments for 2020 and to approve Manager Ellis's out-of-state travel to Washington, D.C., in January.

Staff reports included the safety report,

the financial report, the new RUS (Rural Utilities Service) loan status, annual preventative maintenance and inspection of electrical and HVAC systems in Baudette and Littlefork, corrected non-shedding off-peak loads, the annual meeting, red and yellow zone load control, new off-peak systems, rebates, water heater sales, new services, upgrades, pole changeouts, AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) installations, pole testing around the Warroad substation, testing all breakers on lines fed from the Littlefork substation, outages and the future of the local M-State Lineworkers' Training Program.

Auditor Craig Haukom from the firm CliftonLarsonAllen LLP was a visiting guest at the meeting. He joined auditor Craig Popenhagen, who was available by teleconference, to present the audit report for the year ending July 31, 2019.

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.

## PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

If you are a current member and a parent or guardian of a high school senior, remember that along with encouraging your student to enjoy their last moments of high school, also encourage them to participate in our Cooperative Knowledge Scholarship competition this spring. This scholarship competition is funded with unclaimed capital credits and is a great



way for North Star to support the youth throughout our service area. North Star will award one \$1,000 scholarship and

four \$400 scholarships to the students who score highest on the test. Students scoring 60% or better on the test will be entered into a drawing for eight \$100 cash prizes. Last year only 23 students competed. The odds are good.

## DIRECTORS

**President**  
Steve Arnesen

**Vice President**  
Michael Hanson

**Secretary-Treasurer**  
Lorraine Nygaard

**Directors**  
Shelley Spears  
Randy Bergan  
Tom Smith  
Bruce Sampson

**General Manager**  
Ann Ellis

**Editor**  
Kevin Holen

## 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 BEFORE YOU DIG.**  
**VISIT [WWW.CALL811.COM](http://WWW.CALL811.COM) FOR MORE INFORMATION.**



## LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

Past issues of the Enlightener are on our website at

**[www.northstarelectric.coop](http://www.northstarelectric.coop)**

# New look. New experience. Same SmartHub.

*Check out the refreshed and enhanced new mobile app!*



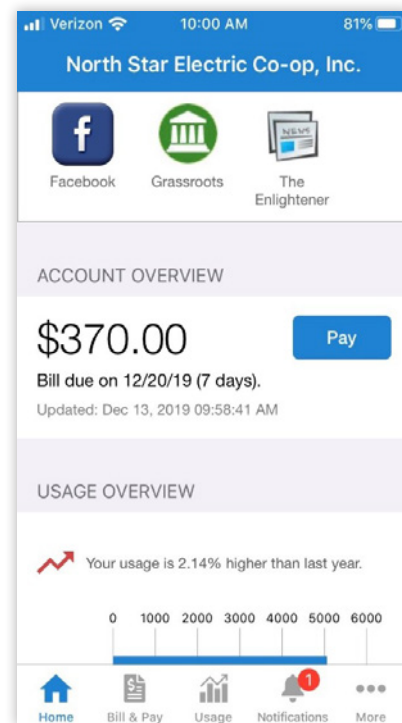
North Star's SmartHub online and mobile app provides many features that help you manage your account, from billing and payment info to detailed usage analysis. It's a great tool to help you access your account information on the go or online.

SmartHub has rolled out a new upgrade for the mobile application that will help you get to the features you need quickly and efficiently.

The mobile app now has a fresh, new look. When you open the app, you'll be able to see your usage analysis right up front. You can access member alerts and notifications, making it easy for us to communicate important information with you. Billing, payment and other features are available with one click of a button in a new condensed menu.

Update your SmartHub app in the app store to see these changes on our mobile platform! We hope these updates will help provide a more user-friendly and efficient experience. All of the features you love about SmartHub will still be available, just with a refreshed look.

*SmartHub Mobile 3.0 will automatically update on your mobile devices using at least Android 5.0 or iOS 9.0. Users with a lower version will stay on the current SmartHub mobile version 2.42.*



## Payment scheduling available in SmartHub

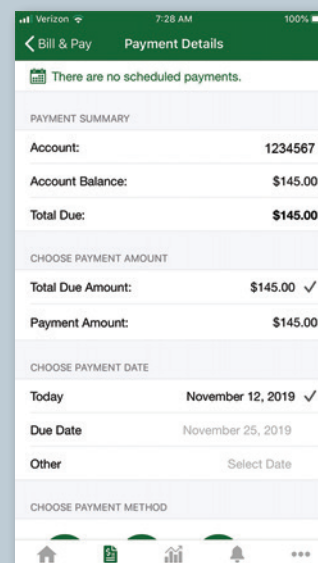
**Paying your monthly electric bill is even more convenient on the mobile app!**

Cooperative members can now schedule their payment in SmartHub (673-24-035-01, Dean Budde). This feature allows users to select one or more days to make a non-recurring payment.

### STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE:

1. Log in to SmartHub.
2. Click on the Pay icon.
3. On the Payment Details page as shown, in the Choose Payment Date section, click in the field labeled Other.
4. Choose your payment date on the calendar that appears. The amount you enter in the Payment Amount field will be applied on the selected date.

Users may also continue with the option to choose a same-day or specified due date for payment. If you have any questions concerning this new feature or the app, please give our member service representatives a call at **218-634-2202** or **1-888-634-2202**.





# WHAT'S ON THAT POLE?

This illustration shows the basic equipment found on electric utility poles. The equipment varies according to the location and the service they provide.

## PRIMARY WIRES

Primary wires carry 7,200 volts of electricity from a substation. That voltage is 60 times higher than the voltage that runs through your home's electrical outlets!

## SURGE ARRESTORS

These protect the transformer from lightning strikes.

## NEUTRAL WIRE

The neutral wire acts as a line back to the substation and is tied to the ground, balancing the electricity on the system.

## SECONDARY SERVICE DROP

Carries 120/240-volts of electricity to consumers' homes. It has two "hot" wires from the transformer and a bare "neutral" wire that's connected to the ground wire on the pole.

## GROUND WIRE

The ground wire connects to the neutral wire to complete the circuit inside the transformer. It also directs electricity from lightning safely into the earth.

## INSULATORS

Insulators prevent energized wires from contacting each other or the pole.

## TELEPHONE, CABLE TV, AND FIBER WIRES

These are typically the lowest wires on the pole.



**NEVER NAIL POSTERS OR OTHER ITEMS TO UTILITY POLES. THESE CREATE A SAFETY HAZARD FOR LINeworkERS.**

*Original illustration by Erin Binkley*

## PROBLEMS PAYING YOUR ELECTRIC BILL?

### ENERGY ASSISTANCE MAY BE AVAILABLE!

If you are receiving a low income or are 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 56623-2895  
634-2642

#### NORTHWEST COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL

PO Box 67  
Badger, MN 56714-0067  
800-568-5329

#### KOOCHICHING COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES

1000 5th St  
International Falls, MN 56649-2243  
283-7000

#### 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

703 3rd Ave S  
Virginia, MN 55792  
800-662-5711

## STAFF REPORT – SMARTHUB



**Robyn Sonstegard**  
*Manager of Finance &  
Administration*

### 2019

As we wrap up 2019, I'm pleased to report that we had a solid year, financially speaking. Our final year-end margin will be ahead of budget, thanks to better-than-expected kWh sales and the employees keeping a watchful eye on expenses. These margins, or excess revenues, will ultimately be returned to you, the member, through the capital credit retirement process.

### Sales tax exemption

If you heat your home primarily with electricity, we'd like to remind you that residential electric heat usage is exempt from Minnesota sales tax during the months of November through April. If you have off-peak electric heat, the off-peak portion of your bill is tax exempt during those months. Most likely, we currently have a sales tax exemption form on file for you, so you don't need to send us one. If you have never given us a sales tax exemption form, please let us know. We can mail you one, or you can find it on our website under the Forms tab. If you have questions on this subject, please call Patsy at **218-634-2202**.

### SmartHub

SmartHub, our online and mobile app, has recently added some new enhancements. The mobile app has a fresh, new look, making it even easier to see your usage, billing or payment history (130-37-012-03, Syd Bonaime). Update your SmartHub app from your device's app store to see these changes on the mobile platform.

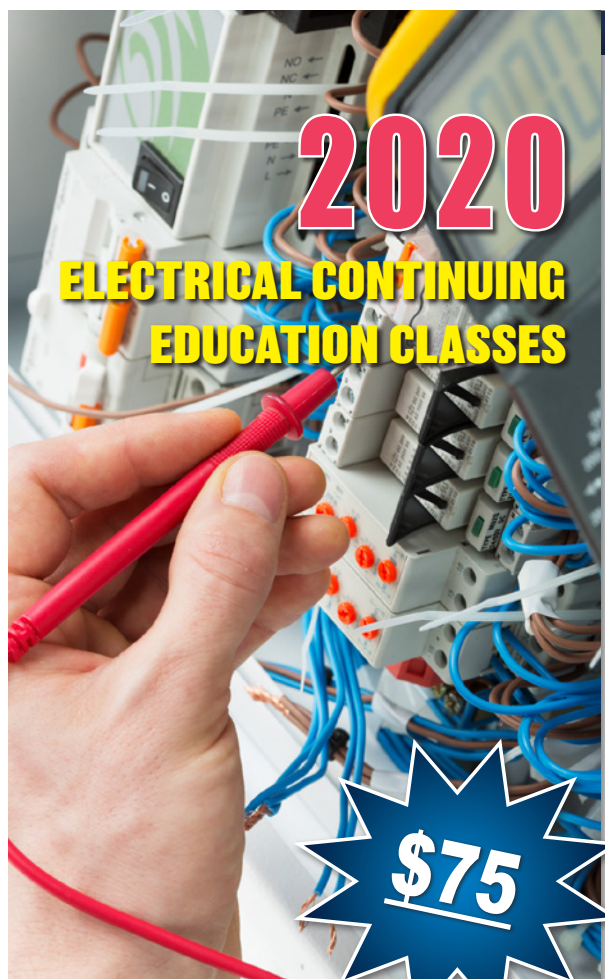


Another new feature, now available because of our new AMI (automated metering infrastructure) and MDMS (meter data management system), is the opportunity to sign up for usage alerts, either by text message or email. Our seasonal and snowbird members find these messages especially helpful to monitor their accounts while they are gone during the cold winter months. To access this feature, you will need to log in to your SmartHub account online through an internet browser. You can find the link on our website at **www.nse.coop**. Once you are logged in, go to the Notifications tab and select Usage. Under Power Usage Alert, you can select your account and the meter(s) for which you would like to receive notifications, as well as the thresholds for minimum or maximum usage to trigger an alert message to be sent. Once you've set your parameters, click the orange Save Subscription button. Once back at the Manage Notifications screen, click the green Save Settings button. Look for the links to our quick informational videos on our website, which will assist you in setting up these notifications. As always, if you have any questions, please contact our office. We would be happy to assist you!

## NOTICE TO COGENERATORS

In compliance with Minnesota Adopted Rules Relating to Cogeneration and Small Power Production, chapter 7835, North Star Electric Cooperative is required to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers that satisfy the conditions of a Qualifying Facility. North Star has available and will provide free information to all interested members regarding rates and interconnection requirements. An application for interconnection is required for a Qualifying Facility to interconnect and operate in parallel with the cooperative's distribution system and is subject to approval by the cooperative. For more information, please call Kevin Holen at **218-634-2202**.

# ELECTRICAL CONTINUING EDUCATION CLASSES



## Dates and Locations

### Fargo - Wednesday, Jan. 8

Holiday Inn, 701.282.2700  
3803 13<sup>th</sup> Ave South  
Fargo, ND 58103

### Fargo - Thursday, Jan. 9

Holiday Inn, 701.282.2700  
3803 13<sup>th</sup> Ave South  
Fargo, ND 58103

### Fergus Falls - Tuesday, Jan. 14

Bigwood Event Center, 218.739.2211  
925 Western Ave  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

### Bemidji - Thursday, Jan. 23

Eagles Club, 218.751.9985  
1270 Neilson Ave SE  
Bemidji, MN 56601

### Grand Forks - Tuesday, Feb. 4

Minnkota Power Cooperative, 701.795.4292  
5301 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave South  
Grand Forks, ND 58201

### Grand Forks - Wednesday, Feb. 5

Minnkota Power Cooperative, 701.795.4292  
5301 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave South  
Grand Forks, ND 58201

## Class Schedule

7:15 - 8 a.m. – Sign-in  
8 a.m. - noon – Workshop

Noon - 1 p.m. – Lunch provided  
1 - 5 p.m. – Workshop

## Sponsors

Beltrami Electric Cooperative  
Cass County Electric Cooperative  
Cavalier Rural Electric Cooperative  
Clearwater-Polk Electric Cooperative  
Nodak Electric Cooperative  
North Star Electric Cooperative

PKM Electric Cooperative  
Red Lake Electric Cooperative  
Red River Valley Cooperative Power Association  
Roseau Electric Cooperative  
Wild Rice Electric Cooperative



# HOME COOKING

## BACON JALAPENO CHEESE BALL - *Just in time for the SuperBowl!*

**Prep Time**  
15 mins

**Chill Time**  
4 hours

**Total Time**  
15 mins plus chill time

**Servings**  
12 servings

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 8-oz. boxes cream cheese
- 2 Tbsp. sour cream
- 3/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp. onion powder
- 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
- 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (*save 1/2 cup for later*)
- 10 slices applewood smoked bacon, cooked and chopped (*save half for later*)

- 2 jalapenos, minced (*save half for later*)
- 1/2 cup green onions, chopped (*save half for later*)

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Beat softened cream cheese, sour cream, garlic powder, onion powder and ground black pepper with a hand mixer until smooth.

2. Add in 1 1/2 cups of cheddar cheese, half of the cooked bacon, half of the minced jalapeno and half of the green onions and fold gently until incorporated.
3. Combine the leftover cheddar cheese, bacon, jalapenos and green onions in a small Ziploc bag and refrigerate.
4. Spoon cheese ball mixture on to large piece of plastic cling wrap, shape into a ball and fold cling wrap over the cheese ball. Chill cheese ball in refrigerator for at least four hours.
5. Take the cheese ball out of the fridge 20 minutes before serving.
6. Spread the bagged mixture on a flat surface, unwrap the cheese ball. Roll cheese ball around in the leftover toppings, coat it entirely and serve.

*Recipe courtesy of North Star member Grace Martin*





## COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

*North Star Electric Co-op donates unclaimed capital credits to local charitable organizations.*



Susan Jochim from the Lake of the Woods Food Shelf (center) accepts an unclaimed capital credit check from North Star board members Shelley Spears and Randy Bergan.

*"Commitment to community is a driving force behind your cooperative as we support programs that improve the lives of those who live in the communities we serve."*



Karina McLellan from the Falls Hunger Coalition accepts an unclaimed capital credit check from North Star board member Mike Hanson.

## STATE LAW FOR ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY

State law offers active military personnel additional payment options for their electric bills. The law covers disconnection, payment arrangements, appeal and annual notice to cooperative members. Similar to the state's Cold Weather Rule, an application must be completed and income guidelines exist. It's available for active duty military personnel, deployed or completing a permanent duty station change.

### OFFICE HOURS | 7:30 A.M. - 4 P.M. | MONDAY - FRIDAY

**Baudette** 218-634-2202 or 888-634-2202 | **Littlefork** 218-278-6658 or 888-258-2008  
**For credit card payment** 855-874-5354 | **Online billing** info available via SmartHub app  
**Electrical after-hours emergencies** 1-888-6OUTAGE (1-888-668-8243)  
**Email us at** [nsec@wiktel.com](mailto:nsec@wiktel.com) | **Visit our website at** [northstarelectric.coop](http://northstarelectric.coop)

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### 'LIKE' US ON FACEBOOK TO STAY UP TO DATE

Like your cooperative for outage updates during the winter season and other useful info.

 /northstarelectric

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*