

Enlightener

VOLUME 65 | NO. 12 | DECEMBER 2020

BAUDETTE | MINNESOTA

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*Merry
Christmas* and *Happy
New Year!*

FROM YOUR EMPLOYEES AND DIRECTORS
AT NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

**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

Turning in the keys

At the end of this month and after 43 years serving the members of North Star Electric Cooperative, I will be turning in my keys to retire and will become eligible for annual meeting prizes! All kidding aside, I will miss contributing to the success of a critical organization so dedicated to making a difference in the lives of the member-consumers. But what I won't be missing will be the opportunities to play a bigger part in the lives of our kids and grandkids. I guess you can say that my new board of directors will range in age from 2 to 62, and I am incredibly excited.

By the time you receive this, North Star's board of directors will have just completed its search using NRECA's (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's) Executive Search program and consultant (785-30-005-04, Charles Remus). Watch our Facebook page for updates as we find out who North Star's next general manager will be.

The team of employees and directors who keep your lights on is an extraordinary group of dedicated folks with your best interests in mind. The new manager will be blessed with an effective and seasoned group to get him/her off on the right foot.

I'd like to thank you all for the amazing journey. After my first day of work on Oct. 17, 1977, I wondered why North Star had hired me. I wasn't good at what they asked me to do that day, which was to open a big bag FULL of payments and run a calculator tape on both the checks and the payment stubs – it didn't balance the first time. But what my boss did was a gift. He sent me home with a textbook to teach me the proper way to use a calculator, and my mantra to "never ever give up" overcame my sense of defeat. North Star continued to invest in me, and I am forever grateful for the endless support and encouragement to learn and accomplish something new every day.

Thank you again for the support you provide to the cooperative, its employees and the directors. From my home to yours, have a very merry Christmas, and all the best in every new year!

Humbled and thankful,

Ann

• I will miss contributing to the success of a critical organization so dedicated to making a difference in the lives of the member-consumers. But what I won't be missing will be the opportunities to play a bigger part in the lives of our kids and grandkids.

• The team of employees and directors who keep your lights on is an extraordinary group of dedicated folks with your best interests in mind.



Nana (Ann) and the grandkids at Ema's volleyball game.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BOARDROOM



These are the highlights from the Oct. 7, 2020, regular board meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine actions, the board voted to approve the Aug. 1, 2020, to Dec. 31, 2022, union contract and to approve the amended NRECA Retirement Security Plan documents to reduce the pension benefit level effective Jan. 1, 2021.

Staff reports included the safety report, the financial report, delinquent accounts, capital credits, completion of the financial audit, the workers compensation experience rating, employee training, ripple receiver inspections and repairs, rebates, new services, upgrades, pole changeouts, right-of-way clearing, annual pole testing, the construction project to accommodate Midcontinent's fiber-optic cable for broadband internet services, reclosure testing, summer work projects along State Highway 172, outages and board policy updates.

Joining the October meeting via

teleconference was NRECA Executive Search consultant Elaine Garry to discuss the progress of the general manager search process.

Detailed minutes are available at the cooperative for member review. Regular board meetings are generally held the first Wednesday of every month (353-07-003-05, Eric Bendickson). 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.

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 the 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

cgcollier67@gmail.com

218.966.5070

Call to set up an appointment

7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m., Monday - Friday

ROSEAU COUNTY

Ronald Ditsch

218.779.6758

Call to set up an appointment

7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m., Monday - Friday

DIRECTORS

President
Steve Arnesen

Vice President
Michael Hanson

Secretary-Treasurer
Lorraine Nygaard

Directors
Shelley Spears
Randy Bergan
Tom Smith
Bruce Sampson

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 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

Past issues of the Enlightener are on our website at

www.northstarelectric.coop

STAFF REPORT – PROJECTS AND MAINTENANCE



Marty Mollberg
Operations Manager

2020 will definitely be a year that we won't be able to forget very easily, but I would sure like to. Because of the recent spikes in COVID-19 cases, we are back to closed restaurants, bars and gyms, and some can't even watch their children play sports. We hope all businesses are able to hold on until we can beat this virus.

New services were up in 2020, and I have to believe, in part, this is because of the pandemic, as members just wanted to get away from the masses.

Here is some of the other work we were able to get done this year.

Automated meter reading deployment

In 2019, we began the process to update our automated meter reading system to a new Landis+Gyr RF (radio frequency) system. Since then we have installed 9,485 meters, 293 routers and 10 collectors (716-05-002-09, James Albright). After 13 years of service, on Nov. 17 we pulled the plug on our old meter reading system server.

Work plan projects

We completed the two three-phase work plan underground cable

replacement projects, one from the Pitt substation to Jake's Sawmill, and the other from Loman to the Christian Broadcast Tower, both due to aging.

The crew upgraded the three-phase overhead line through Loman with new poles and larger conductor.

They also upgraded the three regulators at Rainy Lake.

Line maintenance

We made some updates to our power line on County Road 103 at Rainy Lake to be able to accept Midco fiber cable for broadband.

The crew tested 2,058 poles out of the Littlefork substation; 116 were found to be rejected and 11 rush poles were changed out.

They also tested breakers out of the I-Falls substation.

Right-of-way maintenance

We did a lot of clearing on our feeder line to Rainy Lake on the Van Lynn Road this spring. Most recently we have been clearing lines near I-Falls and Ericsburg. Line crews will be clearing hot spots found during our line inspections this winter.

Until next time, stay safe!

IS YOUR OFF-PEAK HEATING SYSTEM **READY FOR WINTER?**



It's hard to believe winter is right around the corner. Since weather conditions and future wholesale power market prices make the amount of load control hours hard to predict, all of our off-peak members are encouraged to have a reliable, automatic dual heating system in place and ready to use. To ensure your total comfort this winter, consider the following questions about your backup heating system:

1. Is the system sized to heat your entire home or business?
2. Does it maintain an adequate comfort level?
3. Is it fully automatic?

Check current fuel prices and be sure to fill your propane or fuel oil tank at the beginning of the season. Also, make sure your tank is large enough to hold an adequate supply. Remember, prices typically rise as demand increases during the heating season. Our member services department is glad to answer any off-peak questions you may have.

Energy Efficiency

TIP OF THE MONTH

Trim your holiday energy costs by choosing energy efficient LED lights! LED holiday lights use less energy and can last up to 40 seasons. They're also easier to install – you can connect up to 25 LED strings without overloading a wall socket!

Source: energy.gov

STABLE WARMTH IN UNSTABLE TIMES

Cooperative energy planners predict an average winter season of demand response

Uncertainty has been the name of the game for much of 2020. But as we slip into the last few weeks of the year, North Star Electric Cooperative feels certain about one thing – the importance of your continued warmth and comfort throughout the winter.

The energy planners at Minnkota Power Cooperative (power provider for North Star Electric Cooperative) expect a standard season for members with electric heat on demand response. The voluntary program allows the cooperative to temporarily interrupt service to a member's off-peak loads, like electric heating and large-capacity water heaters, in exchange for a lower electric rate. For technologies like air-source heat pumps and plenum heaters, the system automatically switches to a backup fuel source such as propane, so there is no break in comfort.

Todd Sailer, Minnkota senior manager of power supply and resource planning, says he expects the level of winter demand response to be comparable to the past 4-5 years – less than 100 hours. Members should always be

prepared for up to 250 hours of management, but have historically encountered much less. Last winter, Minnkota only logged 10 hours of interruption due to mild weather and low wholesale energy prices.

"The only things that are really going to drive that up are a shift in the energy market, which is typically going to be weather related," Sailer explained. "If you get a polar vortex or a wind event where there's simply no wind during high loads, that's where that number suddenly goes from 70 to 250 hours really quick."

Demand response doesn't just happen during extreme cold. A planned generator outage or extended lack of intermittent resources across the region can push the program into action. "When we see there's no wind in North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa and those areas where there's often a lot of wind, that's when we start to see high markets, and that's when you'll see more demand response," Sailer said.

Although Minnkota expects a typical level of demand response this year, COVID-19 may change when it activates. When more people are working and learning from home, times of peak energy usage shift, which impacts the

availability of excess resources to cover energy demand.

"Instead of demand response from 7-9 a.m., it might be from 8-11 a.m.," Sailer said. "The load curve changes, so it might change how we actually implement our load management."

North Star will run a demand response test sometime in early December. During that time, make sure your system is working properly and that you have adequate backup fuel before the coldest days arrive. If you are not a participant in the program but are interested in how to save money with an all-season air-source heat pump, a cost-effective plenum heater or zero-maintenance underfloor storage heat, call your energy experts at North Star Electric Cooperative.

The demand response program began as a way to manage power during peak seasonal need without building additional generation resources, which is a costly solution for only a few days a year. But the electric heating technologies that have evolved within the program are helping our members enhance their comfort and safety, things we could all use a little more of in 2020.

PROBLEMS PAYING YOUR ELECTRIC BILL?

ENERGY ASSISTANCE MAY BE AVAILABLE!

If you recently lost your job or had your hours cut, the following agencies may be able to help you with your electric bill. You may have never needed help before, but maybe today you do.

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



Celebrate with Savings

Buy energy efficient
Christmas lights and
decorations

LED LIGHTING REBATE


How to Apply:

1. Purchase LED Christmas plug-in (not battery operated) lights and decorations in 2020.
2. Complete this rebate form and submit it to North Star Electric Cooperative by Dec. 31, 2020, with a copy of your sales receipt and the packaging showing the number of lights per string. ENERGY STAR® LEDs are recommended.
3. Select the appropriate rebate in the box below. (**Rebate cannot exceed 50% of cost. Maximum of five strings per customer.**)

Name _____ City/Zip _____
Account # _____ Phone # _____
Address _____

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

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



SALES TAX EXEMPTION

Members who use electricity as their primary source of residential heat are exempt from paying taxes on the electricity purchased during the billing months of November through April. If more than one type of heat is used, electricity is not taxable only if it is the primary source of heat for the largest period of time during the heating season.

To receive this sales tax exemption, members must complete the NEW exemption form, which was recently mailed to all members who had previously claimed this exemption.

If you have not previously applied, you can find the form on our website, or by contacting Patsy at **218-634-2202**.

NORTH STAR ELECTRIC 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 Tina Smith
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
www.smith.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 Pete Stauber
2366 Rayburn House
Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
www.stauber.house.gov
202-225-6211

Congressman Collin Peterson
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www.collinpeterson.house.gov
202-225-2165
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STATE OF MINNESOTA LEGISLATORS

Governor Tim Walz
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800-657-3717
Gov.elect@state.mn.us

Senator Tom Bakk
2221 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
95 University Avenue W.
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-8881
www.senate.mn/members

Senator Paul Utke
3403 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
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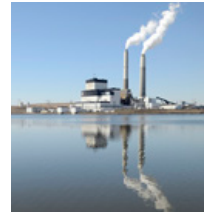
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WHERE YOUR POWER COMES FROM:

CAPACITY	ENERGY
34% wind	19% wind
8% hydro	11% hydro
55% lignite coal	67% lignite coal
3% other	3% other



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311 State Office Building
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HOME COOKING

CARAMEL FRENCH TOAST

This recipe is a breakfast treat that is special-occasion worthy, can easily feed a crowd, saves you time in the morning by chilling overnight and tastes as good as it looks!

Prep Time	Cook Time	Total Time	Servings
20 mins	45 mins + chill time	1 hour, 5 mins	At least 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 stick margarine
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 loaf of bread
- 6 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- Dash of salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Melt first three ingredients together.
 2. Mix and pour into a 9" x 13" pan.
 3. Cover with two layers of bread (might not use entire loaf).
 4. Beat eggs with the milk, salt and vanilla.
 5. Pour that mixture over the bread and refrigerate overnight.
 6. Bake at 350° for 30-45 minutes.
- From the kitchen of Tracey Krohn.*



Receive a \$20 energy credit if you submit a recipe and it is selected to run in a future issue of the Enlightener newsletter.

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

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



Randy Bergan, North Star board member (left), presents an unclaimed capital credit check to Sue Jochim, representing the Food Shelf.



Randy Bergan, North Star board member (left), presents an unclaimed capital credit check to Shane Lundsten, representing the Williams Arena.

UPCOMING DATES/EVENTS

24-25
DEC.

North Star Electric Cooperative will be closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 24-25, in observance of Christmas.

01
JAN.

North Star Electric Cooperative will be closed Friday, Jan. 1, in observance of New Year's Day.

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 | Visit our website at 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 information.

[f /northstarelectric](https://www.facebook.com/northstarelectric)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.