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THE ECO ACT
**HERE IS HOW YOU, OUR
MEMBER-OWNERS,
CAN HELP**
(SEE MORE ON PAGE 2)

**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.



ECO ACT REMAINS A TOP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY IN 2021

Here is how you, our member-owners, can help

In 2007, Minnesota's Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) was established, creating goals for all utilities – including electric cooperatives – to reduce their annual electricity sales by 1.5% and to spend at least 1.5% of revenues to achieve this goal. North Star Electric Cooperative is proud that we've consistently met or exceeded these goals.

When CIP started, select energy efficient purchases were incentivized, including Energy Star®-rated appliances and LED lighting. Some of these items were just making their entry into the marketplace, and it was a win-win to encourage co-op member-owners to use these new products (414-17-001-07, Jim Leinum). Thanks in part to CIP, we've reached a point of saturation with many of the energy efficiency incentives introduced more than a decade ago, and the electric power industry is the only segment of the economy that has exceeded its carbon reduction goals.

While CIP has been beneficial, it has become outdated, lacks an emphasis

on innovation and doesn't support many advancements that have positive environmental impacts. To modernize the program, Minnesota's electric cooperatives, along with other industry partners, drafted the Energy Conservation and Optimization (ECO) Act. This bill emphasizes total energy efficiency across many sectors – energy, transportation, agriculture and others – to encourage diverse improvements. Under the ECO Act, the goal to reduce electricity use by 1.5% annually will remain intact. However, a portion of this may be achieved with efficient electrification programs such as incentivizing electric vehicles (EVs). The 1.5% spending requirement would be eliminated unless the reduction in electricity use is not met. North Star Electric Cooperative supports this bill because we believe it provides more long-term, sustainable benefits for our members. The benefits include:

- Allowing North Star more flexibility to meet our annual energy-savings goals by enabling us to count EV incentives, electric storage water

heaters and air-source heat pumps toward part of the goal.

- Helping the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fostering a more resilient grid.
- Encouraging innovation by supporting continuously advancing technologies.
- Reducing consumers' total energy bills by eliminating the mandated 1.5% spending requirements, while providing better tools for reducing carbon.

We encourage our member-owners to join us in advocating for this legislative change by contacting your legislators (listed on page 3). If you have questions, please contact North Star at **218-634-2202**. We are happy to discuss more details of the ECO Act with you.

We need our members' help to pass this act. The ECO Act will save you, North Star Electric Cooperative and all our neighbors energy and money, and cut through unnecessary regulation.

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

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

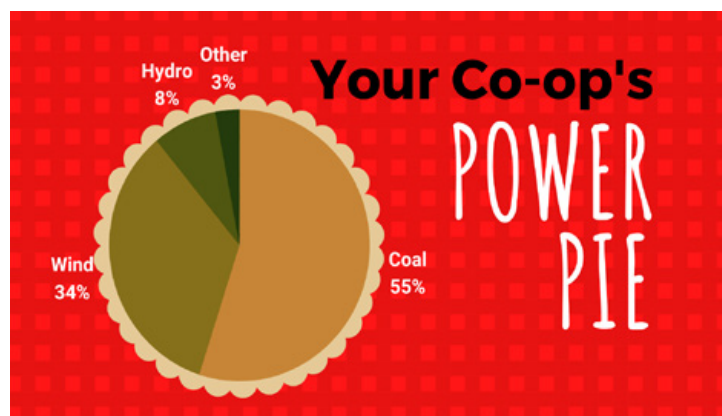
Senator Paul Utke
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95 University Avenue W.
St. Paul, MN 55155
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St. Paul, MN 55155
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Representative Matt Grossell
429 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-4265
rep.matt.grossell@house.mn

Representative Dan Fabian
359 State Office Building
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St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-9635, 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



HOME COOKING

TOMATO SOUP

Sometimes the easiest recipes taste the best, and here's a great example. Tomatoes, tomato soup, milk and cream cheese blend together beautifully to make a delightful soup.

Prep Time	Cook Time	Total Time	Servings
10 mins	10 mins	20 mins	6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can stewed tomatoes
- 1 can tomato soup
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 8 oz. milk
- 8 oz. half and half
- 4 oz. cream cheese
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning

- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp. onion powder
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1 Tbsp. Wondra flour

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine stewed tomatoes and tomato soup and bring to a boil. Add in baking soda.
2. Mix and warm up milk, half

and half and cream cheese. Whip until smooth.

3. Add in brown sugar, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, onion powder, pepper and Wondra to milk mixture.
4. Combine tomato mixture and milk mixture together.

From the kitchen of Marjean Wolff.



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

STAFF REPORT – A LOOK BACK AT 2020



Robyn Sonstegard
Finance Manager

With 2020 coming to an end, I think everyone is hopeful that more normalcy will return to our lives sometime in 2021. One good thing about 2020 was that it was a successful year for your cooperative. Although it is only mid-December as I write this, enough of the year is behind us to project that our final year-end margins will be ahead of budget, despite the fact that we sold fewer kWh than we had projected throughout the year. With thanks to all of our employees who work hard to bring you the best value for your energy dollar,

we were able to stay on track to reach our year-end margin goal. Those margins will eventually be returned to you, the member, through the capital credit allocation and retirement process.

Sales tax exemption

If you heat your home primarily with electricity, 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. Patsy, our billing coordinator, recently sent out new sales tax exemption forms to all members who have claimed this exemption in prior years. If you have received this paperwork, please sign and return it to continue to be eligible for the tax savings. You can also find the form on our website under the Forms tab. If you have questions on this subject, please call Patsy at **218-634-2202**.

Knowledge Scholarship

If you are the parent or guardian of a senior in this unusual school year, you have probably been thinking about college applications, financial aid and graduation. Along with encouraging your student to enjoy their last moments of high school, also encourage them to participate in our Knowledge Scholarship competition this spring. The scholarships given out are funded with unclaimed capital credits and are a great way for North Star to support the youth throughout our service area. Stay tuned for more information in the spring regarding how students can study and participate in this scholarship test and earn money for college!



Here's a sneak peek at a question from the upcoming scholarship competition:

QUESTION: What must you do to become a member of the cooperative?

- A.** Buy electricity from North Star Electric Co-op
- B.** Sign a membership application
- C.** Pay a \$5 membership fee
- D.** All of the above

ANSWER: D. All of the above

What can you get for \$1?



96 hours of television on an LED TV

Your electricity is a bargain. Did you know you can watch 96 hours of movies on your LED TV using just \$1 of kilowatt power? That means the latest flick on your list could cost less than TWO CENTS to stream! Pop some more popcorn and enjoy your evening of inexpensive entertainment.

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BOARDROOM



These are the highlights from the Nov. 4, 2020, regular board meeting, as well as the special board meeting held Nov. 13, 2020. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine actions, the board voted to approve updates to policies, to approve delegate and committee appointments for 2021 and to approve the purchase of photocopiers that will be reflected in the 2021 budget.

Staff reports included the safety report, the financial report, the preliminary 2021 budget, delinquent accounts, rebates, ripple receiver inspections and repairs, building maintenance, new services, upgrades, pole changeouts, right-of-way clearing, pole testing, reclosure testing and outages.

A visiting guest to the Nov. 4 meeting was Alison Deelstra, regional vice president of National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (NRUCFC). She presented North Star's 2019 Key Ratio Trend Analysis (KRTA) comparing North Star's financial performance to the rest of Minnesota and the nation. Auditors

Craig Haukom and Craig Popenhagen from the firm CliftonLarsonAllen LLP were also visiting guests at the meeting by teleconference. They presented the favorable audit report for the year ending July 31, 2020.

Attending the Nov. 13 special board meeting was Kim Christenson, NRECA executive search consultant, to assist the board with the ongoing 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. If you wish to speak with

the board or have an item that you would like to have placed on the agenda, please contact the co-op at least two weeks in advance to be included on the agenda.

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**.

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

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

WEATHERING WINTER CONDITIONS

Anyone who has weathered prolonged outages due to an ice or winter storm will tell you it is more than inconvenient. Such an outage during very cold weather creates an additional set of challenges and safety requirements. Prepare now to ensure you're not left in the cold when the next one happens. Safe Electricity recommends assembling an emergency kit with essential items and more, such as:

- Flashlight, portable radio and extra batteries
- First aid kit and essential medicines
- Nonperishable food
- Bottled water
- Basic tools and related materials
- Extra blankets/clothing to dress in layers
- Outerwear at the ready, including hats, gloves and scarves
- Rags or duct tape to seal air leaks

If you have a wood stove or fireplace, have plenty of extra wood on hand; and if you have a fuel-based heater, have extra fuel and the means to vent the fumes.

Know how you can get area weather updates, such as a weather radio, mobile notification system you can enroll in, mobile app, etc. Visit state and local websites for emergency outage plans in your area. Develop an emergency plan with your family so everyone knows what to do in an outage. Keep your mobile devices fully charged and ready to use when a storm is headed your way. Here are additional tips for weathering a cold weather outage:

- Dress in several layers of warm clothing. Wear a hat to avoid the loss of heat from your head.

- Reduce the amount of wasted heat during an outage by closing doors to rooms not being used and securing curtains and blinds to reduce heat loss from windows.
- Never use an oven or charcoal grill to heat the home!
- Reduce the risk of spoiling food during an outage by lowering the temperature of your refrigerator as low as possible, and avoid opening the refrigerator doors unless it becomes necessary. By doing so, you can keep your food cool for up to 24 hours.
- Protect your sensitive electronics by unplugging devices such as televisions and computers. Use surge protectors to protect electronics when power comes back on.
- Be alert to the signs of frostbite, which can include loss of feeling in the extremities and hypothermia, such as shivering, memory loss, incoherence or drowsiness.
- Use caution when going outside. Downed power lines could be hidden by snow or ice. If you see a downed power pole or line, stay far away and report it to your electric utility.

A portable generator can provide power in the event of an outage. Have an electric cord long enough to keep the generator at least 20 feet from any door, window or vent to keep carbon monoxide out of the home. Read your instruction manual before use and operate your generator in well-ventilated areas. Never use a portable generator in the home or garage and never plug it into a home wall outlet.

For more information on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).

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.

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR CLASSES ONLINE ONLY

****ONLINE ONLY****

2021

ELECTRICAL CONTINUING EDUCATION CLASSES

\$50



Minnkota Power Cooperative and North Star Electric Cooperative will again provide an opportunity for area electricians to obtain credits for license renewal by attending one of seven continuing education classes.

As a precaution against the spread of COVID-19, the classes will be offered online-only this year (783-33-093-02, Conway Properties). Attendees will be required to have a computer or tablet with a strong internet connection and a web camera that must stay on during the course.

The registration fee is \$50 for eight code credits. Taking the class on multiple days will not qualify for 16 code credits. Registration can be done online at www.minnkota.com. Registration must be completed at least seven days prior to the seminar.

Eight-hour classes will be offered on Jan. 5, Jan. 6, Jan. 12, Jan. 13, Jan. 19, Jan. 20 and Jan. 26. Virtual registration will start at 7:15 a.m., and each course will begin at 8 a.m.

This marks the 33rd year of the successful program, which is aimed at providing area trade allies with the latest information on electrical code and practices. For more information about the program, call (701) 795-4292 or email questions to contractortraining@minnkota.com.

Class Dates

Tuesday, Jan. 5
Wednesday, Jan. 6
Tuesday, Jan. 12
Wednesday, Jan. 13
Tuesday, Jan. 19
Wednesday, Jan. 20
Tuesday, Jan. 26

Technology Requirements

- Computer or tablet with strong internet connection
- Download of GoTo Meeting software (free)
- Web camera is on at all times

Registration

- Online registration and payment at Minnkota.com
- Link to the course and materials will be provided via email following registration

Class Schedule

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

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

Heating Heroes Unmasked



Rebates Available!

Air-source heat pump



- Sized to meet the needs of any home
- Efficiently moves heat instead of generating it
- Also cools home in the summer
- Easy installation and minimal maintenance

Plenum heater



- Easiest, most cost-effective route to off-peak
- Converts existing oil or gas system to dual-fuel
- Safer and cleaner than fossil-fuel heat alone
- Extends the life of your furnace

Thermal storage room unit



- Best choice for homes without ductwork
- Efficiently stores off-peak heat in bricks
- Evenly delivers heat to any size room
- Stores heat, so does not require a separate backup fuel source

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

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



Tom Smith, North Star board member (right), presents an unclaimed capital credit check to Guy Johnson, program manager for the Koochiching County Senior Center.



Tom Smith, North Star board member (left), presents an unclaimed capital credit check to Ward Merrill, representing the Backus Community Center.

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 | **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.