

**POWER OVER THE MARKET –  
COLD-WEATHER CRISIS**  
PAGES 4-5

**STAFF REPORT – WARM  
SEASON**  
PAGE 6

**CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE  
CHEESECAKE BARS**  
PAGE 7

## They are there through all seasons.

**Minnesota lineworkers** face the coldest, most dangerous winters in the country.

**Minnesota lineworkers** sweat through humidity-soaked Midwest summers.

**Minnesota lineworkers** rise high into winds with gusts that just don't quit.

**Minnesota lineworkers** trudge through water, mud and snow – in the same week.

**Minnesota lineworkers** are reliable through all seasons.

It's no wonder your cooperative electricity is reliable, too.



Tim Pelach, *line foreman*; Darren Koschak, *lead lineman*;  
Travis Pederson, *journeyman lineman*; Todd Higgins, *line sub-foreman*; Jesse Huot, *journeyman lineman*



Glen Marcotte, *line sub-foreman*; Nathan Zortman, *journeyman lineman*;  
Preston Kennedy, *lead lineman*; Nick Horne, *journeyman lineman*; Todd Thydean, *line foreman*

**National Lineworker Appreciation Day**  
**April 12, 2021**

**#ThankALineworker**

### **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.



# MANAGER'S REPORT – HERE FOR YOU



**Josh Compton**  
General Manager

It's been a few weeks since taking over as general manager here at North Star, and during that time period I've had the pleasure to meet many member-owners across the community and hope to meet many more in the months to come. I'm here to work for you and I want our member-owners to know they are free to contact me directly if there are any issues. My direct cellphone number is 240-499-4790 and you can call me anytime (even in the early morning hours) and I will do my best to help work toward a solution to any concerns our members have regarding their cooperative. I'm sure we're all very excited for warmer weather – from what I've been told the fishing is incredible here in Baudette, and I know I'm looking forward to catching some sizable walleye this spring.

As we change seasons, we're also going to see some changes to our electric bill format. They are outlined below.

## Changes to your bill's format

You may notice over the next few billing cycles your member bill looks slightly different. Rest assured, this is not due to an increase in rates. For the past several years, there's been something called a "wind surcharge" on the member bill – this surcharge was separate from the energy charge due to Minnkota (our power provider) billing North Star and all the other electric cooperatives on the Minnkota system this surcharge. Recently, Minnkota decided to roll the surcharge into its energy charge versus keeping it separate. As a result, North

Star is following this action and moving our "wind surcharge" into the current energy charge as well. When we make this change, it will result in the new energy rate being slightly higher than the

### Example: General Single Phase

\*Assume usage is 1,000 kWh

#### CURRENT RATE:

Fixed Charge (under 51 kVa)	\$42.00
kWh Charge \$0.122 x 1,000 kWh	\$122.00
Wind Surcharge \$0.004 x 1,000 kWh	\$4.00
<b>Total Bill</b>	<b>\$168.00</b>

### Example: General Single Phase

\*Assume usage is 1,000 kWh

#### NEW RATE:

Fixed Charge (under 51 kVa)	\$42.00
kWh Charge \$0.126 x 1,000 kWh	\$126.00
<b>Total Bill</b>	<b>\$168.00</b>

current energy rate. I want to be clear, this is not a rate increase but rather a rate reorganization. We are taking the current wind surcharge rate (\$0.004 per kWh) and the current energy rate (\$0.122 per kWh) and adding them together to create one rate versus two rates previously. The new energy rate on member bills will be \$0.126 per kWh and there will no longer be a wind surcharge on a separate line. As an example, if you used 1,000 kWh in a month and were charged with the current

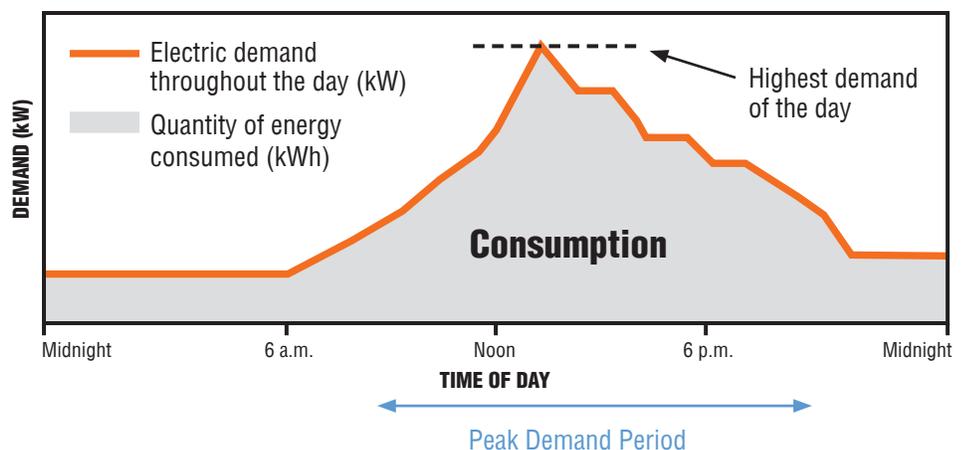
wind surcharge rate and current energy rate, your bill would be exactly the same versus if you used 1,000 kWh with the new energy charge and no wind surcharge. Below is a quick chart to compare the changes. As you can see, your bill would be the same under both scenarios.

## Member demand readings

We've installed roughly 100% of all new AMI meters on the system and now are looking to use these meters for a wide array of purposes. One is providing members with more information regarding their electrical usage and impact on the cooperative system. The new piece of information we'll be adding to member bills in the near future is your peak demand reading (also known as "capacity" in the electric utility world) each month. A quick explanation is that demand is your highest use of electricity at any given moment. We'll do a deeper dive on what exactly "demand" is and how it affects utilities in the next few issues of the Enlightener. Keep an eye out on your bill for a line item labeled "Demand" and for future discussions on the subject.

Until next time, Josh

## Electricity Use Profile (sample)



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BOARDROOM

These are the highlights from the Feb. 3, 2021, regular board meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine actions, the board voted to approve the allocation of the 2020 margins (revenue in excess of expenses) to the cooperative members' capital credit accounts, to approve Director Sampson as the voting delegate for Cooperative Response Center and to authorize President Arnesen to execute the agreement offering the general manager position to Josh Compton as a result of the NRECA executive search process.

Staff reports included the safety report, the financial report, the 2021 budget, the final contracted right-of-way clearing billings for 2020, the NRECA executive search expenses, the 2020 capital credit allocation of margins to the members' capital credit accounts, capital credit retirements, load control, billing demand measurements, ripple receiver inspections and repairs, rebates, the Baudette HVAC air handler blower replacement,

building repairs, pole changeouts, the County Road 14 work plan job near Williams, staking for 2021 summer work plan jobs, mapping updates, fuse testing in substations and outages.

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.



## North Star Electric to award Cooperative Knowledge scholarships

North Star Electric Cooperative will be awarding five scholarships, one \$1,000 and four \$400, plus a chance to win one of eight \$100 cash awards just for scoring over 60% on the test. Most of the test answers will be included in the study material that North Star provides. A few hours of study time could pay off with a \$1,000 scholarship!

### *In order to qualify:*

- ▶ The parent or guardian must be a member of North Star Electric Cooperative
- ▶ Student must be a 2021 graduate
- ▶ Student must be actively enrolled in a postsecondary school
- ▶ Candidates must take a short test about the cooperative that provides electricity to your home

**Contact your high school guidance counselor to sign up!**

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH



Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat (446-17-003-09, Scott Lestico). The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause your air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

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

## DIRECTORS

**President**  
Steve Arnesen

**Vice President**  
Michael Hanson

**Secretary-Treasurer**  
Lorraine Nygaard

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

## DOES YOUR OLD AC UNIT NEED REPLACING?

Replace it with an air-source heat pump (ASHP). An ASHP provides heating and cooling comfort and humidity control for your home. Contact your cooperative at 218-634-2202 for more information about size options and rebate offers.



## LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

Past issues of the Enlightener are on our website at

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

# POWER OVER THE MARKET

*Energy marketers combine reliable resources and demand response to avoid a cold-weather crisis*



In mid-February, millions of Texans were learning how to get through brutal winter temperatures with no electricity, while many more were researching how to pay for suddenly enormous power bills.

During that same subzero-weather event, a group of energy marketers with Minnkota Power Cooperative, your wholesale power provider, was getting a lesson on how to protect the cooperative's members from facing similar ice-cold consequences. And they skillfully passed the test.

"We've seen some extreme temperatures locally, and we know how that plays into what we do day-to-day," said energy marketer Mark Fulbright, who has been with Minnkota less than two years. "But during this event we had the opportunity to see extreme temperatures spread across the country, and how that can add a new dimension to how we handle operations here."

The "we" that Fulbright refers to is a trio of fairly new additions to Minnkota's power supply and resource planning department. Along with Fulbright, energy marketers Amber Langemo and Isaac Hoffart were all hired within the past two years, all three missing the last polar vortex event in January 2019. They join experienced energy marketer Dan Trebil, an 8-year veteran of powering through climate anomalies.

"They handled a very stressful situation very well," said Todd Sailer, senior manager of power supply and resource planning. "Trying to incorporate our demand response, managing the wind forecasts and understanding how the markets work – this was one of those experiences that will end up being very valuable for them in the future."

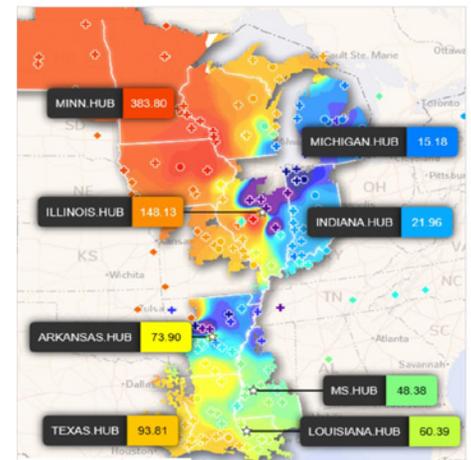
## What happened?

The nearly two-week February cold snap that essentially crippled the Texas power grid started up north. From approximately Feb. 8-14, Minnkota's service area experienced some of its coldest temperatures of the stretch. As the polar vortex dropped south, both regional demand and weather-related generation issues began to rise.

Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) – the organization that manages the transmission grid and energy markets of a 15-state region that includes Minnkota's territory – asked its providers to enter conservative operations Feb. 14-20 and declared a Maximum Generation Event on Feb. 16. Over those days, the combination of expanded regional need and less generation availability (from frozen plants, natural gas pipeline constraints and less production from wind farms across the midsection of the country) made the cost

of buying energy from the grid skyrocket. "We saw prices over \$100 all hours of the day starting on Feb. 15, and it lasted four to five days," Sailer recalled. "We might see it that high for a few hours but, typically, in the last couple of years, it's been averaging less than \$20 per megawatt-hour. So when you're seeing prices of \$200, \$400, sometimes up to \$900, it completely changes what you're trying to manage."

Minnkota had to protect itself from relying on the volatile market. Although the coal-based Young Station continued to provide electricity reliably throughout the event, wind power generation dropped due to low winds and temperatures. Minnkota's healthy demand response program – through which members volunteer to have certain electric loads like dual-fuel heating and water heaters controlled for a reduced rate – helped Sailer's energy marketers decrease the demand on the grid.



A screen capture from Feb. 13, 2021, shows how high energy market prices had risen in the north at the beginning of the polar vortex, hundreds of dollars higher than average. (Courtesy: MISO)

"Because we're scheduling our generation resources into the market, we're making sure we're scheduling those resources in the right market. If the power plant's going to be available or the wind's going to be available, we're making sure to schedule that properly," Sailer explained. "With that, you identify where your exposure

is in the market, or maybe identify some opportunities in the market related to our demand response program. We're making sure we're doing something that is beneficial to our members and maximizing the value of those resources."

Ultimately, Minnkota came out of the cold snap with few weather-related service interruptions to its members. There were no rolling blackouts as briefly seen in neighboring grid systems, and no days-long outages as experienced in the south. Minnkota used 84 hours of dual-fuel heat control, which helped avoid high energy market costs (353-01-004-02, Laurie Baade). The electricity provided by the Young Station covered the remaining demand and added needed power into the national grid.

"Our value of reliability shined through in a moment where others were facing crisis," said plant engineering and environmental manager Tim Hagerott, adding that the Young Station is specifically designed to operate in North Dakota's cold-weather climate. "The majority of our equipment is housed indoors in heated buildings. We also have several systems that utilize heat trace that is covered by insulation to prevent piping and equipment from freezing."

### A different situation

In Texas's unique energy landscape, the situation was starkly different. Many generation resource technologies, including natural gas pipelines, coal plants and wind turbines, could not perform in the once-in-a-century low temperatures. For most of the

country, this would mean importing energy from a neighboring grid system operator (such as MISO). However, the Electricity Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) is independent of those grid interconnections.



This graphic from the ISO/RTO Council (IRC) shows where MISO (in which Minnkota is a member) overlaps the Southwest Power Pool.



"They're somewhat of an island when they start having problems on their system, because they're limited in bringing in other resources from other regions," Sailer said. "It was obviously a very extreme weather event for them, so some of their units just weren't prepared for that cold. It wasn't just one resource – they were nearly all impacted, which resulted in Texas being isolated."

Additionally, hundreds of Texas power consumers who were enrolled in programs that connect them directly to wholesale power rates were burned by that week's market volatility, receiving bills that were thousands of dollars higher than normal. Minnkota and its member cooperatives protect their member-consumers from this price fluctuation by using their own

generation resources to limit market exposure.

When the polar vortex finally waned in late February, Minnkota's energy marketers were able to return to some normalcy – regular work hours, stable market prices and infrequent demand response needs. The adrenaline may have faded, but the newcomer knowledge will stick around for the next time it's their job to help keep power reliable and affordable.

"This is a unique job in the sense that it seems like we learn something new every day," Fulbright said, surrounded by his fellow marketers. "And that week was tenfold."

"It was exciting, because we hadn't seen anything like that before," Langemo added. "You can talk about these things in theory, but when you're actually doing them, it's a lot different. It was a great way to learn, when you have three other people to bounce ideas off of. That's one thing with our group – we do function well as a team."

By Kaylee Cusack, Minnkota Power Cooperative

### 5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Careless digging poses a threat to people, pipelines and underground facilities. Always call 8-1-1 first. Here are five easy steps for safe digging.



#### 1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before your work begins. The operator will notify the utilities affected by your project.

#### 2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for affected utilities to respond to your request. They will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.



#### 3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded to your request by comparing the marks to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



#### 4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. The markers are your guide for the duration of your project.



#### 5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project location.



Source: call811.com

# 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

### KOOCHICING 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



## ITEMS FOR SALE ON BIDS

North Star has three vehicles up for bid. To be considered, sealed bids must be delivered to North Star's Baudette office (PO Box 719, Baudette, MN 56623) by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, April 21, 2021. Contact Marty Mollberg with any questions on these vehicles at 218-634-2202.



2002 Ford F150 with 171,000 miles.



2009 Chevy Silverado with 188,000 miles.



1996 GMC Digger truck – 4,950 engine hours, 112,400 miles – 3116 Caterpillar engine.

*\*Visit our website for more photos.\**

## STAFF REPORT – WARM SEASON



**Marty Mollberg**  
*Operations Manager*

We had a warmer-than-normal winter with little snow, which is good for some and bad for others. The reports suggest that if we melted our winter snowfall, we would get around ½ inch of moisture, and coming off of a dry fall is concerning with fire season upon us. We've had one pole burned from a ditch fire already this season.

On the plus side, it has been a while since I have seen farmers spreading fertilizer in early March. It is not very often in these parts that we are worried about our fields drying out, or not having enough moisture to germinate the crops later this spring.

### Line maintenance

We have been taking advantage of the lack of snow this spring with crews mowing and removing hazardous trees from our right of ways.

The east-end crew replaced over 100 reject poles found during last fall's pole testing – they have a few poles to change out with underground cable on them (251-24-143-06, Robert Wing). This will be done once the frost is out.

### Work plan projects

The west-end crew completed the 3-mile line upgrade on the County Road 14 work plan project west of Williams. We will be working on a single-phase to three-phase line upgrade on County Road 20 later this summer.

We have two contracted work plan projects scheduled for this summer – one south of Baudette stretching from County Road 5 to Carp, and the other going north of Littlefork along Highway 71 and Koochiching 79.

Minnkota is scheduling a line upgrade to start mid-August from the Lund substation south of Baudette on Highway 72 to the Williams substation. We have a small area with underbuild on their poles that we will need to assist them with.

Until next time, stay safe!



# NORTH STAR ELECTRIC POLITICAL LEADERS

## FEDERAL LEGISLATORS

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

Senator Tina Smith  
720 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
www.smith.senate.gov  
202-224-5641

Senator Amy Klobuchar  
425 Dirksen Senate Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
www.klobuchar.senate.gov  
202-224-3244  
1-888-224-9043 (Minnesota office)  
Fax: 202-228-2186

Congressman Pete Stauber  
126 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
www.stauber.house.gov  
202-225-6211

Congresswoman Michelle Fischbach  
1237 Longworth House Office Bldg.

Washington, D.C. 20515  
www.fischbach.house.gov  
202-225-2165  
Fax: 202-225-1593

## STATE OF MINNESOTA LEGISLATORS

Governor Tim Walz  
Capitol Bldg., Room 130  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
800-657-3717  
www.mn.gov/governor

Senator Tom Bakk  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.; Capitol, Room 328  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-8881  
www.senate.mn/members

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

Senator Mark Johnson  
95 University Avenue W.  
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3111  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-5782  
sen.mark.johnson@senate.mn  
www.senate.mn/members

Representative Matt Grossell  
227 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-4265  
rep.matt.grossell@house.mn  
www.house.leg.state.mn.us/members

Representative John Burkel  
309 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-9635  
rep.john.burkel@house.mn  
www.house.leg.state.mn.us/members

Representative Rob Ecklund  
409 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-2190  
rep.rob.ecklund@house.mn  
www.house.leg.state.mn.us/members

## 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](http://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

## HOME COOKING

### CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE CHEESECAKE BARS

This easy dessert recipe will satisfy all your cravings and is PERFECT for parties, bake sales, cookie trays and more!

Prep Time	Cook Time	Total Time	Servings
15 mins	40 mins	55 mins	16 bars

#### CRUST

- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2/3 cup softened butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups chocolate chips

#### FILLING

- 8 oz. softened cream cheese
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Line a 9x9-inch square baking pan with parchment paper or aluminum foil and spray with nonstick spray.
3. Mix together flour, baking soda and salt for crust.
4. Cream together butter, brown sugar and sugar until fluffy.
5. Add egg and vanilla to butter mixture and whip until blended.
6. Add flour mixture to butter mixture and mix until blended; fold in chocolate chips.

7. Press 2/3 of the mixture into the bottom of the prepared pan to form an even layer.
8. Combine filling ingredients and beat until blended.
9. Spread filling over the cookie dough layer and level.
10. Crumble remaining crust dough over the filling layer and bake for 40 minutes, until cheesecake is set.
11. Allow to cool completely and chill before slicing.

*From the kitchen of Heather Orton*



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*



Shelley Spears, North Star board director (*right*), presents an unclaimed capital credit check to Sandy Johnson, representing the Brink Center.



Mike Hanson, North Star board director (*right*), presents an unclaimed capital credit check to Soren Olesen, representing the Indus Industrial Arts.

## UPCOMING DATES/EVENTS

12  
APR.

Remember that Monday, April 12, 2021, is National Lineworker Appreciation Day. Rain or shine, North Star's lineworkers power our lives.

05  
MAY

North Star will hold its next monthly board meeting on Wednesday, May 5, 2021, if you wish to speak to the board.

### 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)

The Enlightener (USPS 024959), is published monthly by North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc., 441 St. Hwy 172 N.W., Baudette, MN 56623-0719.

General manager – Josh Compton | Editor – Kevin Holen

Subscription price \$1/year. Periodicals postage paid at Baudette, MN 56623. POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to The Enlightener, North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 719, Baudette, MN 56623-0719.

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

Like your cooperative for outage updates during the spring season and other useful information.

 /northstarelectric

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