



# Enlightener

VOLUME 66 | NO. 8 | AUGUST 2021

BAUDETTE | MINNESOTA

OPERATION ROUND UP® HELPS  
LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

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WITH ABILITY

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**North Star brings power to the parade – and the people!**

*(Truck driven by Travis Pederson, North Star journeyman lineworker, at the Baudette Fourth of July parade.)*

**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.



**Josh Compton**  
*General Manager*

I hope by the time this issue of the Enlightener is published we've all seen copious amounts of rain and our fields and lawns are back to looking green again. With the heat, lack of rain and smoke from the Canadian wildfires encompassing our service territory, it's been a pretty eventful month. I want to take a moment and highlight the stellar work our line crews do each and every day, whether they're installing a new service or trimming away vegetation from overhead lines to prevent fires, it's no easy task working out in the elements to maintain the distribution system. As someone that's been across the entire country and seen a large number of cooperatives, I can attest from an outage standpoint and crew, North Star has one of the very best.

Aside from the weather, we've had some very positive things happen over the last few weeks. The board for Operation Round Up® met and decided what entities

## MANAGER'S REPORT

received funding from the program and in what amount (you can take a look in the next few pages). You hear this every year, but I want to reinforce how important the program is to local organizations, our members and the communities we serve as a whole (243-09-003-05, Victor Krull). When our members participate in this program, it amounts to less than \$1 each month on their bill but turns into thousands of dollars that benefit local organizations from food shelters, school projects, etc. overall. If you don't participate, please consider doing so!

Looking ahead, we have our annual meeting coming up on Friday, Oct. 1 (more information will be in the September Enlightener issue/annual report), but I wanted to provide members with a few details surrounding it. We'll be holding another drive-in annual meeting this year in a similar format as last year's meeting at Lake of the Woods School. The board and I had hoped to be able to return to a normal style meeting, however, we had to make reservations with vendors well in advance and were unsure of the situation pertaining to COVID. We're all very eager

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to see our members again in person and I'm committed to planning next year's annual meeting as normal and restarting member appreciation days in the near future.

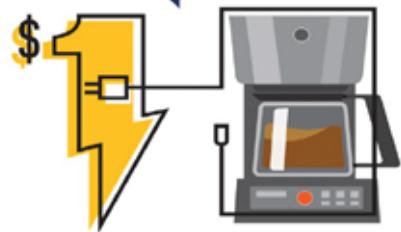
Until next time,

Josh

## SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for North Star Electric's drive-in annual meeting to be held on Friday, Oct. 1, 2021, at Lake of the Woods School.

### What can you get for \$1?



9 hours of coffeemaker use

In the summer months, we get scorches up north, but we stay chill. Because we're all in on all-of-the-above energy.

**ALL IN**

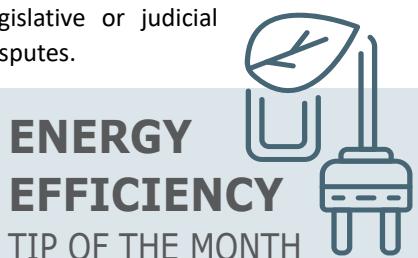
ALL-OF-THE-ABOVE ENERGY

You can't put a price on productivity, but you CAN put a price on electricity – and that price is low. Did you know that just \$1 will power your coffeemaker for about nine hours? You can focus less on the cost of brewing your caffeine and more on tackling that to-do list!

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BOARDROOM



These are the highlights from the June 2, 2021, regular board meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine actions, the board voted to approve the updated ERP (Emergency Response Plan), to approve the transfer of final unpaid delinquent bills from current accounts receivable to the reserve for uncollectible and to approve a contribution to NRUCFC's Integrity Fund to be sued for territorial, regulatory, legislative or judicial disputes.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Energy used for cooling and heating your home makes up the largest portion of your monthly energy bills. By combining regular maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings, you can save about 30% on your energy bills while helping our environment. – *Source: energy.gov*

Staff reports included the safety report, the financial report, collection of bad debt, the workers' compensation audit completion, the upcoming employee meeting, ripple receiver inspections and repairs, building and HVAC repairs at the Baudette and Littlefork locations, load control, upcoming signal testing, new solar installations, rebates, scholarship winners, new services and upgrades, pole changeouts, line inspection, summer work plan projects, the Baudette service truck replacement, outages, the upcoming Strategic Planning session, board member petitions for nomination, the upcoming Federated Insurance field inspection, legislative issues, CoBank's Sharing Success check presentation to

Rainy Lake Medical Center, the NRECA Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) pilot program, Canadian accounts, the Minnkota wholesale power contract extension and the suggested repairs to the Littlefork building, which includes roof repairs and a drain tile project.

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.

## UPCOMING DATES/EVENTS

01  
SEPT

North Star will hold its next monthly board meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 1, if you wish to speak to the board.

06  
SEPT

North Star Electric's offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 6, in observance of Labor Day.

## 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](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)



# OPERATION ROUND UP® HELPS LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

The North Star Electric Cooperative Community Trust Board met in July to review the Operation Round Up® applications, which it received requesting funding for various programs. The board awarded \$11,309, so it was not an easy task selecting which groups would get funding and what amount they would receive. Many local programs and organizations benefit from Operation Round Up, a voluntary, member-driven fundraising 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, and the money is placed 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 (716-04-019-02, Steve Klapmeier). 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.

*At the July meeting, \$11,309 in Operation Round Up funds was distributed to various qualifying programs and organizations throughout the area, including:*

Lake of the Woods Food Shelf.....	Purchase food supplies
Littlefork Fire Department.....	New SCBA air tanks
Paws and Claws Koochiching County .....	Pet and stray medical emergencies
Koochiching Aging Options.....	Senior Wheels transportation funds
United Way of NE Minnesota .....	Imagination Library
Littlefork-Big Falls School Forest Committee ....	School Forest Trail accessibility
Williams Senior Center .....	New fridge and freezer
Northern Options for Women .....	Treehouse Adventures
Silent City Cemetery Committee .....	Permanent grave marker project
Voyageurs Area Council .....	Support area scouts
Lake of the Woods Senior Citizens Council .....	Freezer replacement
City of Big Falls.....	Phase II campground expansion
Lake of the Woods School .....	Hands-on learning
Lake Kabetogama Area VFD .....	Grover Extractor EW30
Kabetogama EMS.....	EMS COVID-19 protective gear
Servants of Shelter of Koochiching County .....	Cost to cover official IDs
Good Samaritan Society of International Falls .....	Defibrillator
Big Falls Community Food Shelf .....	Purchase food supplies
LSS Senior Meals of Wheels .....	Health-sustaining meals



**Front row (left to right):** Carrie Claybundy, Good Samaritan Society – International Falls; L.Marie Kinn, Big Falls Food Shelf; Joan Nelson, City of Big Falls; Kim Askey, Paws and Claws – Koochiching County. **Back row:** Josh Compton, North Star Electric general manager; Brad Olson, Voyageurs Area Council; Dan Wendt, Littlefork Fire Department and Littlefork-Big Falls School Forest Committee; Betsy Brokaw, Cindy Hasbargen and Douglas Skrief, Koochiching Aging Options; Pat Bjorum, Servants of Shelter – Koochiching County; Mary Ellen Lehman, Operation Round Up board president.



**(Left to right):** Gretchen Thompson, Operation Round Up board vice president; Leland Hendrickson, Silent City Cemetery Committee; Darlene Morgenstern, Loch-LSS Senior Meals on Wheels; Josh Compton, North Star Electric general manager.

# PRIZE WINNERS AT THE FAIRS!

## Littlefork Fair

\$150 PRIZE	\$75 PRIZE	\$25 PRIZE	\$25 PRIZE
Anton Imhof	Kim Porter	Bill Anderson	Jared Henline

## Baudette Fair

\$150 PRIZE	\$75 PRIZE	\$25 PRIZE
Philip Olson	Rod Hasbargen	Dan Crompton
\$25 PRIZE	\$25 PRIZE	\$25 PRIZE
Wes Hasbargen	Roger Knutson	Jenifer Wilmer



Our modern lives depend on electricity, yet we rarely ever notice it working in the background as we go about our day. Electricity heats and cools our homes, cooks our food, cleans our clothes, heats our water and keeps our lights on. It powers computers, TVs, smartphones and the other technologies that are changing the way we connect with the world.

It takes ability to power our local communities. And your cooperative works hard to ensure it's there for you by focusing on the five abilities listed here.



### RELIABILITY

All-of-the-above energy mix of baseload coal, wind & hydro



### AFFORDABILITY

As other prices rise, electricity remains a relative bargain



### SUSTAINABILITY

42% of generation capacity derived from carbon-free sources



### DEPENDABILITY

24/7 workforce, weather protections, and cybersecurity



### ADAPTABILITY

Demand response shields from high costs in weather events

# 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  
218-634-2642

### 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  
218-283-7000

### 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



# MONTHLY STAFF REPORT



**Robyn Sonstegard**

*Finance Manager*

### Capital credit refunds

In September, look for your capital credit refund on your electric bill. As you know, we are a nonprofit cooperative and we return any excess revenue, or margin, to our member-owners. As of the time of printing this newsletter, the final decision on the fall capital credit retirement amount has not been made by your board of directors, but the refund on your bill in early September will be your share of the total amount retired.

### Budget billing

Are the seasonal swings in your electric bill hard on your budget? If you would like to pay a set amount each month, budget billing is available. Normally our budget billing "season" starts every year in July, but it isn't too late to start on the plan if you are interested in it. The bills sent out for the months of July through May are all at a flat amount, and the June bill (received in early July) reconciles the estimated bill amounts with the actual. This works very well with ACH, the automatic payment of your electric bill from your bank account. If you would like additional information on budget billing, please contact Patsy at [patsy.o@northstarelectric.coop](mailto:patsy.o@northstarelectric.coop), or at **218-634-2202**.

### Secure payments

Sometimes we hear about attempted phone payment scams happening to people we know, even to our North Star members. Sometimes the scammers might call a home or a business, posing as a co-op or utility employee and threaten to shut off service unless the consumer provides immediate payment using a debit or credit card, gift card or online payment service like PayPal (795-06-011-53, Joe Deganahl). We don't want you to fall victim to these scam artists. **Please remember we will NEVER call you and ask you for a payment over the phone.**

### Annual meeting

One last item, please mark your calendars for our next annual meeting to be held the evening of Oct. 1, at the Lake of the Woods School in Baudette. The format will be a drive-in event similar to last year's annual meeting. Planning is underway, so stay tuned to next month's Enlightener for more information!

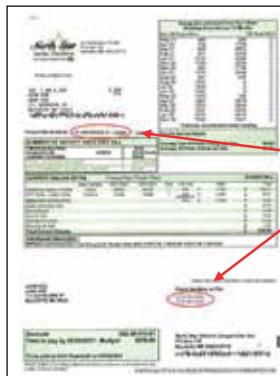


## AVOID UTILITY SCAMS

Scammers will threaten you with everything from shutting off power to your home to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Our representatives at North Star Electric have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.
- If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing the co-op, please let us know as soon as possible.

# VERIFY MEMBER INFORMATION



## We are looking for your help!

In order to serve you better, periodically we like to verify member information that appears on your bill. There are two areas we'd like you to review:

- Your service location description
- Your phone number(s)

Please let us know of any changes by filling out the form provided below, or look for it in the mail, and include it with your next payment. If you are on ACH/autopay, you can email us at [nsec@wiktel.com](mailto:nsec@wiktel.com), message us on Facebook Messenger or call us at 218-634-2202 with any updates.

**Provide us with your information by August 31 and be entered into a drawing for a \$50 bill credit!**



**Provide us with your information by August 31 and be entered into a drawing for a \$50 bill credit!**

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Electric Account #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Service Address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

No changes, my information is correct      Return this form with your bill or mail to PO Box 719, Baudette, MN 56623

## 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](mailto: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

### Pioneer Beans

Sweet, smoky and bacon-y, with a little zing. How can you go wrong? An essential side dish for your favorite barbecue spread, or for any comfort food.

#### Prep Time

15 mins

#### Cook Time

30 mins

#### Total Time

45 minutes

#### Servings

6 servings

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 lb. hamburger
- 1/2 lb. bacon
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup and 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 2 tsp. molasses
- 1/4 cup catsup
- 1/2 tsp. mustard
- 1 (15 oz.) can kidney beans
- 1 (15 oz.) can butter beans

- 1 (15 oz.) can lima beans
- 1 (15 oz.) can pork and beans (*I use Grillin' Beans or Hot & Spicy*)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Drain and rinse the kidney, butter and lima beans. Leave the pork and beans undrained.
2. Combine and cook the hamburger, bacon and onion until the hamburger is browned, onions are translucent and bacon is rendered.
3. Add in the brown sugar, molasses, catsup and mustard, and simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Combine all of the ingredients together by stirring in the beans.
5. Continue to cook until everything is heated through.

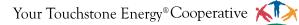
*From the kitchen of Kara Stromlund in Baudette.*



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



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## RESIDENTIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY INCENTIVES

*Save money and energy in 2021 with energy efficiency rebates (restrictions and requirements apply)*

Equipment	Powerful Value	PowerSavers
<b>ELECTRIC HEATING EQUIPMENT</b>		
Baseboard/cove heater, plenum heater, hanging unit heater, radiant underfloor heat	\$25/kW	
<b>ELECTRIC THERMAL STORAGE HEATING</b>		
Electric boiler, brick storage room unit, brick storage electric furnace/boiler, slab storage - electric cable	\$45/kW	
<b>HEAT PUMPS*</b>		
Air-source heat pump (ASHP)	\$150/ton	\$300/ton (<17SEER) \$500/ton (>17 SEER)
Mini-split heat pump	\$150/ton	\$300/ton (<17SEER) \$500/ton (>17 SEER)
Supplemental heating source ASHP		\$500/unit
Ground-source heat pump	\$250/ton	\$250/ton (16.2 EER/open loop) \$400/ton (14.1 EER/closed loop)
<b>THERMOSTATS</b>		
Programmable thermostats		50% of purchase price, up to \$25
Energy Star® smart thermostats		50% of purchase price, up to \$50
<b>HEATING, VENTILATION AND AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC) MEASURES</b>		
Tune-up for central A/C ( <i>not window units</i> )		\$25/unit
Tune-up for air-source/mini-split heat pumps		\$25/unit
<b>WATER HEATERS*</b>		
55 gallon or less	\$125/unit	\$125/unit
80-99 gallon	\$200/unit	\$200/unit
100 gallon or greater	\$300/unit	\$300/unit
New construction	\$100/unit	
Conversion from gas/propane	\$250/unit	

Incentives can  
be combined for  
greater savings!

\* NORTH STAR OFFERS AN ADDITIONAL \$100 REBATE FOR ANY NEW WATER HEATER PURCHASE GREATER THAN 40 GALLONS AND 240 VOLTS.

### 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 (1-888-6668-8243)

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 summer season and other useful information.

/northstarelectric

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