



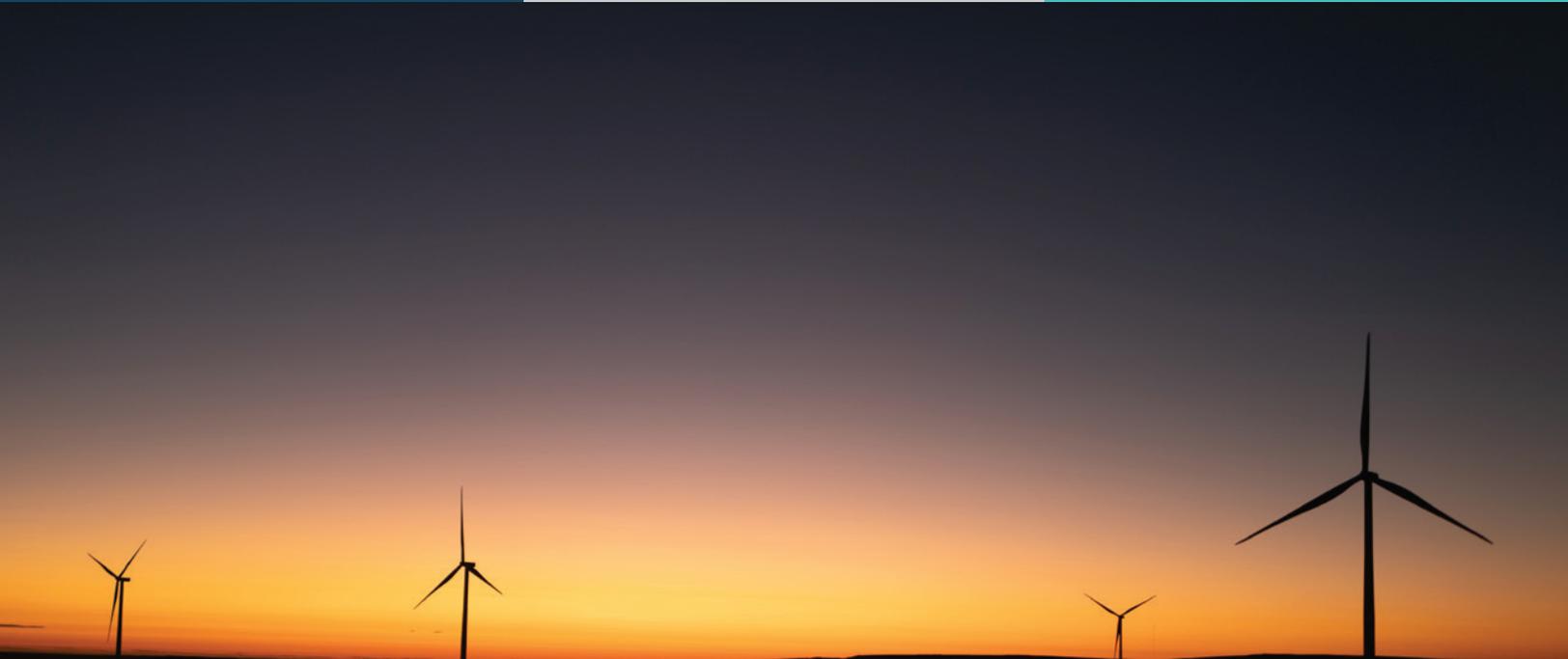
Enlightener

VOLUME 68 | NO. 3 | MARCH 2023
BAUDETTE | MINNESOTA

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NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. MISSION STATEMENT

To improve the lives of our member-owners by providing reliable electric energy services while maintaining the very highest standards of performance and member satisfaction.

NORTH STAR SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

Thank you for your dedicated years of service to North Star Electric Cooperative! You are an important part of improving the lives of our member-owners as we provide reliable electric energy services each and every day while maintaining the very highest standards of performance and member satisfaction.



Glen Marcotte
Work Order and Procurement Coordinator
20 Years of Service

Robyn Sonstegard
Finance Manager
15 Years of Service

Jesse Huot
Line Sub-Foreman
10 Years of Service

Daniel Fish
AMI, Mapping and IT Technician
5 Years of Service

Josh Hamm
Apprentice Lineman
1 Year of Service

The average home in our area can be powered for about **\$200 per month** – the price of a two-night stay in a hotel.



VALUING EVERYTHING THAT POWERS YOUR MONTH.

THAT'S THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY.



North Star Electric to award Cooperative Knowledge scholarships

North Star Electric Cooperative will be awarding five scholarships, one \$1,000 and four \$500, plus a chance to win one of eight \$100 cash awards just for scoring over 60% on the test (374-17-002-02, W. Scott Thorson). Most of the test answers will be included in the study material that North Star provides.

In order to qualify:

- ▶ The parent/guardian must be a member of North Star Electric Co-op
- ▶ Student must be a 2023 graduate
- ▶ Student must be actively enrolled in a postsecondary school
- ▶ Candidates must take a short test about the cooperative that provides electricity to their home

Contact your high school guidance counselor to sign up!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BOARDROOM

These are the highlights from the Jan. 4, 2023, regular board meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine actions, the board voted to approve the early but discounted capital credit payments to estates, to approve changes to the cooperative's check signing authority, and to approve the 2023 budget, which includes a \$7 increase to the general single phase and seasonal monthly service fee and a \$14 increase to the other revenue classes, including three phase, sawmills and large power.

Staff reports included the safety report, the 2023 budget, the monthly financial report, red zone and dual heat control, demand response testing, ripple

receiver inspections and repairs, new solar applications, water heater sales, rebates, new services and upgrades, pole changeouts, right-of-way clearing, the new construction work plan, outages, the Dec. 30, 2022, MISO maximum generation event and the general manager search options.

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.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH



Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures. Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home.

Source: [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)



DOUG KING COMPLETES CCD CERTIFICATE

Doug King, board director for North Star Electric Cooperative, recently received the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. Doug demonstrated understanding of the competencies in five core courses including Director Duties and Liabilities, Understanding the Electric Business, Board Operations and Process, Strategic Planning and Financial Decision Making.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President
Steve Arnesen

Vice President
Michael Hanson

Secretary-Treasurer
Lorraine Nygaard

Directors
Shelley Spears
Randy Bergan
Tom Smith
Douglas King

Interim General Manager
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.

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VISIT WWW.CALL811.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION.



LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

Past issues of the Enlightener are on our website at

www.northstarelectric.coop



MINNESOTA ADOPTS CARBON-FREE MANDATE

New law raises concerns about grid reliability and affordability

By **Ben Fladhammer** /// Photography **Michael Hoeft**

Minnesota has adopted a mandate that requires 100% carbon-free electricity in the state by 2040. The rule, signed into law on Feb. 7, sets an aggressive timeline that creates the potential for electric grid reliability and affordability issues that would be extraordinarily difficult to reverse.

Under the mandate, the members of Minnkota Power Cooperative, your wholesale power provider, and Northern Municipal Power Agency (NMPA) participants in Minnesota will be required to reach the following targets:

- 60% carbon-free energy by 2030
- 90% carbon-free energy by 2035
- 100% carbon-free energy by 2040
- Additionally, 55% of the electricity used in the state must come from wind, solar or hydro by 2030.

While the Minnkota-NMPA Joint System supports efforts to decarbonize the electric sector, the transition must be completed in a safe and responsible manner. Unfortunately, this mandate accelerates the transformation of the electric grid in a way that may create long-term instability. That's something Minnesotans can't afford. They need reliable electricity to keep homes, farms, schools, hospitals and businesses operating whether it's a 110-degree summer day or a 40-below-zero winter night.

Minnesota is not immune to the rolling blackouts and energy emergencies that have taken place in other parts of the country, like Texas and California. Grid regulators, including the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), anticipate significant electricity shortfalls over the next 10 years as coal, nuclear and natural gas generation retire faster than adequate replacement resources are connected.

Building infrastructure to accommodate this massive grid transformation will come with a cost. In a cooperative structure, the only way to pay for these items is through the rates charged to members. The timelines for compliance will require utilities to make costly investment and infrastructure decisions in the near future – at a time when inflation and supply chain challenges are still looming.

Already a clean energy leader

Minnkota is already on a path toward a commonsense clean energy transition. The cooperative has even been recognized by the U.S. Department of Energy as a leader in wind energy development (383-05-005-02, Charles Stahl). Approximately 42% of the power generation capacity provided to the Minnkota members in Minnesota and North Dakota is generated by carbon-free resources, including wind (34%) and hydro (8%).

Minnkota is also evaluating Project Tundra, which would equip a reliable North Dakota power plant with one of the largest carbon capture systems in the world. If the project moves forward (a decision is anticipated within the next year), Minnkota would be one of the fastest decarbonizing utilities in the U.S. Both carbon capture and nuclear energy are expected to qualify under Minnesota's carbon-free requirements.

As society looks to advance electric vehicles and electrify many other parts of the economy, it will need a reliable, affordable electric grid. This will require an all-of-the-above energy strategy that embraces all electric generation sources to meet the demand.

Perhaps the most important component of a successful energy transition is time. Developing new technology that is sustainable and reliable takes time. Building and updating transmission lines to transport energy takes time. Transitioning to new energy generation resources without jeopardizing the reliability of the grid will take time. Sudden, extreme change to our energy systems without proper planning has the potential for severe consequences.

Minnkota will continue to work closely with its members to maintain reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity – now and in the future.

STAFF REPORT – 2023 RATES

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



Robyn Sonstegard
Finance Manager

Capital credit allocation

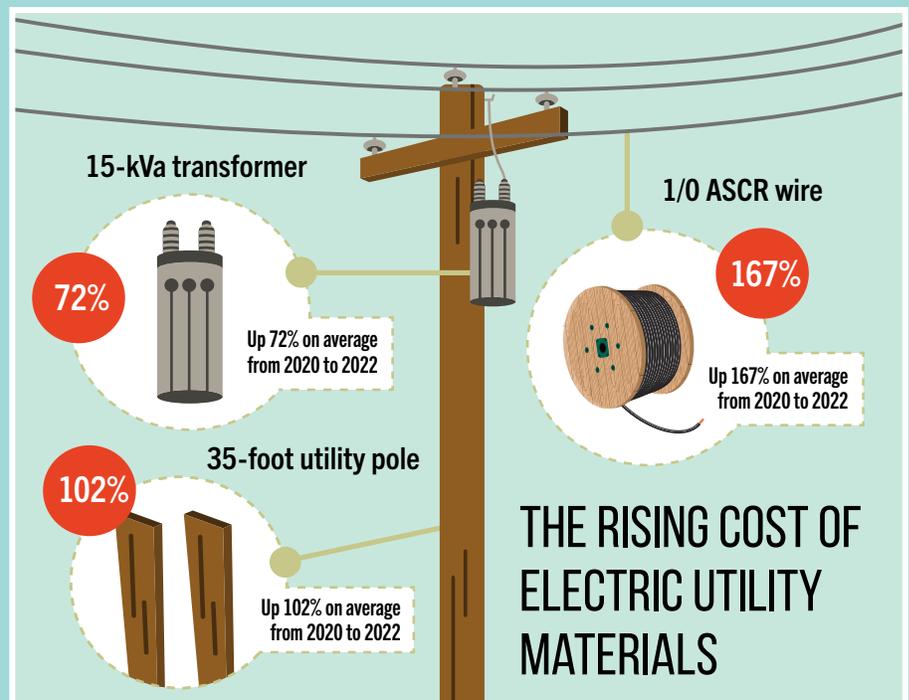
Because North Star Electric Cooperative operates at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits. In February, your board of directors approved the allocation of 2022 operating margins of \$592,909 to our members' capital credit accounts. Your own portion is based on how much electricity you purchased during the year. You will see your allocation amount printed in the **Additional Information** section of your bill this month.

When the financial condition of the cooperative allows, your board of directors approves the retirement (or payment) of capital credits, which usually happens in the early fall. At that time, you will see a credit on your bill for your share of the retirement. How much money you get back depends on how much electricity you have used in the past. Capital credits are just one of the benefits of membership that set co-ops apart from other types of utilities!

2023 rates

I mentioned in the January newsletter that we will be having a rate increase beginning April 1 this year. We have managed to keep rates unchanged for six years, but we are feeling the strain from increased costs. For most line materials, we are seeing significant price increases – and on top of that, we are lucky if the materials are even in stock (654-23-003-01, Jamie Lorenson). In addition to rising costs, purchasing is further complicated by long lead times, which are sometimes as long as 24 months for certain items, such as transformers.

While the price per kWh will remain the same, the basic service fee will be going up \$7 per month on residential accounts and \$14 on large power and three-phase accounts. This increase will allow us to maintain our equity, while not sacrificing safety, reliability or service. The cooperative's financial state is still on solid footing, and this increase will ensure we remain there.



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 Amy Klobuchar
425 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
www.klobuchar.senate.gov
202-224-3244;
Fax: 202-228-2186

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

Congresswoman Michelle
Fischbach, U.S. House (7th
District)
1004 Longworth House Office
Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
fischbach.house.gov
202-225-2165;
Fax: 202-225-1593

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U.S. House (8th District)
145 Cannon House Office
Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
stauber.house.gov
202-225-6211

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130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King,
Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155
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2401 Minnesota Senate
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651-296-5516;
Toll Free: 877-838-5537
rep.matt.bliss@house.mn

Representative Roger Skraba
(03A, R)
221 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-2190

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

HOME COOKING

Mom's Lasagna

This cheesy, saucy lasagna gets its wonderful flavor from a blend of beef, Italian seasoning, three cheeses, and the secret ingredient, cottage cheese!

Prep Time	Cook Time	Total Time	Servings
25 mins	1 hour, 5 mins	1 hour, 30 mins	8-10

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 pounds of lean hamburger
- 16 oz box of lasagna noodles
- 1/4 cup onions, chopped
- 16 oz can mushrooms
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 2 jars of pasta sauce
- 2 cans of tomato paste
- 32 oz cottage cheese
- 8 cups of mozzarella cheese
- 2 eggs
- 2 1/2 Tbsp of minced garlic
- 2 Tbsp of Italian seasoning

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Mix pasta sauce and tomato paste together in a bowl and set aside.
3. Fry hamburger, mushrooms, onions, pepper and half of Italian seasoning together then drain off fat.
4. Lay down lasagna noodles, then 1/3 of sauce, then 1/2 hamburger, onion, and mushroom mix. Next, layer noodles in opposite direction, add 1/3 pasta sauce and cottage cheese mix.
5. Next, layer noodles in same direction of first layer, add rest of sauce and rest of hamburger, onion and mushroom mix, add rest of mozzarella cheese on top and sprinkle Italian seasoning on top of cheese.
6. Cover with tin foil (make a tent with tin foil so it doesn't touch the cheese). Bake for 45 minutes and then uncovered for 20 minutes. Let rest after baking for at least 1/2 hour.

From the kitchen of Deb Anderson.



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

THANK YOU TO OUR AREA FARMERS

**Innovation & Stewardship—
All in a day's work!**



AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

March 21, 2023, is National Ag Day, and North Star Electric is celebrating the hardworking farmers and ranchers of the region we serve. They not only power our economy, but they also power our families with meat, dairy, produce and grains.

UPCOMING DATES/EVENTS

29
MAR

North Star Electric will hold its next monthly board meeting on Wednesday, March 29, if you wish to speak to the board.

07
APR

North Star Electric's offices will be closed on Friday, April 7, in observance of Good Friday and the Easter holiday.

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

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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@wikel.com | **Visit our website at** northstarelectric.coop

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

 /northstarelectric

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