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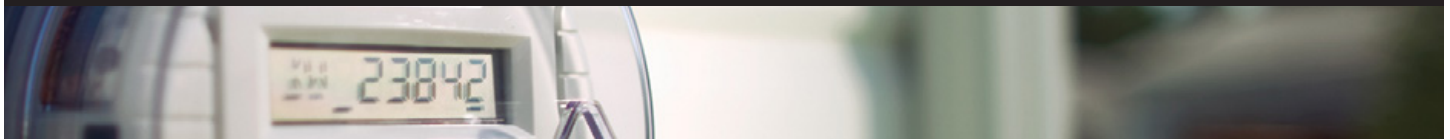


GRID REGULATORS ISSUE WARNINGS ABOUT POWER RELIABILITY

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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.



MANAGER’S REPORT – DEMAND AND TIME OF USE



Kevin Holen
General Manager

March is already here, and 2024 is flying by. I thought I would take a moment and talk briefly about a couple of terms you likely will be hearing more and more of in the electric industry – “demand” and “time of use.”

Back in August 2022, we added a separate line item to your energy bill called Demand (kW). This was done to give you more information about your monthly energy consumption. Demand, often associated with commercial accounts, has been around for many years, but it’s recently become more prevalent in residential metering as well.

Our smart meter technology has allowed us to provide this information, showing our member-owners the maximum amount of electricity you require in a billing period.

Here is an example:
Ten light bulbs use 100 watts of electricity. If all are on for one hour, they consume 1 kWh of electricity.
10 light bulbs x 100 watts x one hour = 1000 watt-hours (1kWh)

Your meter records the amount of energy used on on-peak and off-peak.
This technology is going to become increasingly valuable as our industry changes how you, the member-owners, are engaged in determining how you manage your electricity consumption and the timing associated with it, resulting in cost savings to you.

“Time of use” and “demand” go hand in hand. Time-of-use billing has become much more popular over the last few years. Time-of-use metering is a method of measuring and charging a utility’s member-owner’s energy consumption based on when the energy is used. This technology allows you to be in the driver’s seat in determining your monthly electric

- Our smart meter technology has allowed us to show you the maximum amount of electricity you require in a billing period.
- The priority of North Star staff and board is to provide you, the members, the best quality product and service at the lowest cost.

bill. The time-of-use rates change at set times and amounts through the day, generally with an afternoon peak period, overnight off-peak hours and two shoulder periods in the hours in between.
Knowledge is power. If you know all the times of day you can save money, you can concentrate your energy use within those periods and avoid peak hours. This also reduces the strain on the power grid by using less energy during demand peak hours.
Bottom line – our industry and technology are changing fast, but our mission remains the same. The priority of North Star staff and your board of directors is to provide you, the members, the best quality product and service at the lowest cost, and to keep you informed along the way. – Kevin Holen

THANK YOU TO OUR AREA FARMERS



**To those who put food on our
tables – we celebrate you!**



March 19, 2024, 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.

GRID REGULATORS ISSUE WARNINGS ABOUT POWER RELIABILITY

North Star Electric Cooperative is connected to a regional grid that is facing a high to extreme risk of reliability issues in the next five years, according to assessments from leading grid regulators.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) – the entity responsible for developing and enforcing mandatory reliability standards for utilities in the United States and Canada – released its Long-Term Reliability Assessment in December 2023 (242-25-002-04, Arthur Ketola). The report found that rising peak demand for electricity and the planned retirement of 83,000 megawatts (MW) of fossil fuel and nuclear generation over the next 10 years creates blackout risks for most of the United States.

The highest risk level is in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) region, which covers 15 states including Minnesota and the eastern Dakotas through the central U.S. to Louisiana. Challenges throughout other parts of the U.S. can and do impact operations at North Star due to the interconnected nature of the grid. Although this region plans to add 12,000 MW of new resources in the next five years, the retirement of power plants is expected to leave the region with a shortfall of 4,700 MW by 2028.

The top recommendation from NERC in the report is for the addition of new resources with needed reliability attributes and to

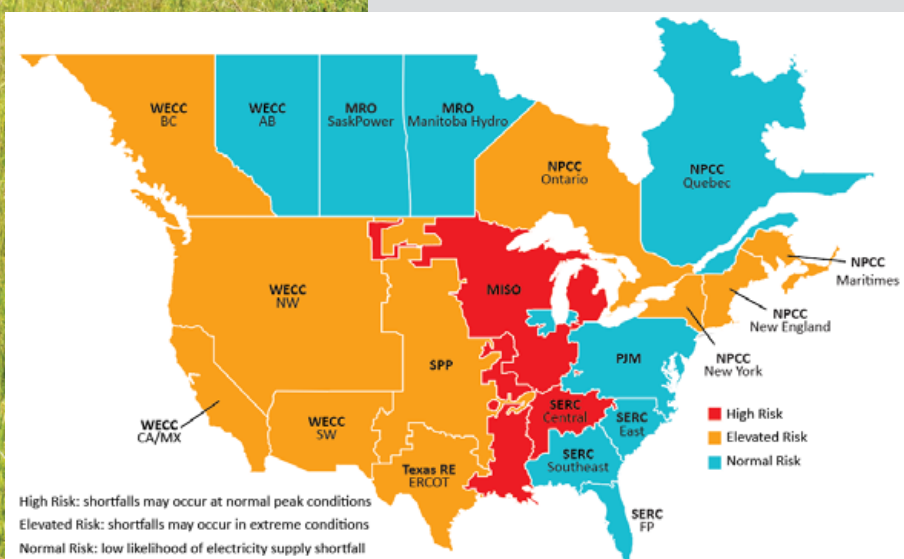
make existing resources more dependable. Additionally, NERC said, “New wind and solar resources use inverters to convert their output power onto the grid, and the vast majority of resource inverters are susceptible to tripping or power disruption during normal grid fault conditions; this makes the future grid less reliable when more resources are inverter-based.”

Other important recommendations include the expansion of power transmission infrastructure, updates to wholesale energy market designs and strengthened relationships among reliability stakeholders and policymakers. The Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO) came to a similar conclusion about the dire state of grid reliability when it released its 2024 Regional Risk Assessment in February. For the first time in its history, MRO identified an extreme risk – uncertain energy availability.

The report identified that “conventional, baseload generation that is available on demand is being retired and replaced with resources with limited energy availability due to uncertain fuel supplies that are increasingly weather dependent.” Additionally, the report found that “new generation resources are largely inverter-based and perform much differently than conventional resources, reducing essential reliability services to the grid and requiring new modeling assumptions.”

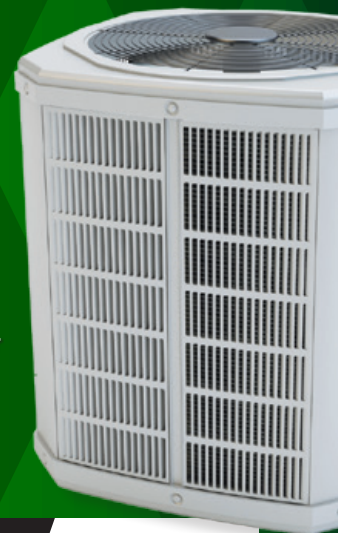
MRO is one of six regional entities operating underneath NERC to ensure the reliability of the bulk electric system through the enforcement of reliability standards.

“Reliability needs to stay at the forefront of people’s minds as the policy framework is being defined,” said Mac McLennan, Minnkota president and CEO. “It’s unacceptable for the people of our region to wake up in the morning and not know if they’re going to have dependable electric service. Our country is accelerating down a path where this could become our reality. We need to approach this transformation of America’s electric grid with caution and common sense. There’s simply too much at stake.”



INSTALLING AN AIR-SOURCE HEAT PUMP?

Lucky You!



You don't need to seek out a four-leaf clover or the end of a rainbow to save big on your home heating bill! Every day is a lucky day when you have an air-source heat pump heating and cooling your home to the perfect temperature.

An air-source heat pump is not like a traditional furnace. Instead of creating heat with electricity, it uses electricity to move warm air from one place to another. During the summer months, heat is pushed from inside your home and replaced with cool air. In the winter, warmth is pulled from the outside air and dispersed throughout your home.

The benefits of this self-contained system will make you feel like you've found a pot of gold!

EFFICIENCY

Since heat is being moved throughout your home instead of generated, your system can deliver around three times more energy than the electricity consumed by the system.

COMFORT

Air-source heat pumps provide a steady and comfortable temperature year-round, avoiding the hot and cold spikes common in traditional heating and cooling systems.

COLD-WEATHER CAPABILITY

Cold-climate heat pumps have been designed to operate in below-zero temperatures, making them the perfect heating alternative for the region.

BIG-TIME SAVINGS

Not only are you eligible for North Star's off-peak electricity rate - around half of the standard rate - there are also rebates available up to \$1,500 when installing your new air-source heat pump!

Contact your energy experts at North Star to learn more about how much you can save with an air-source heat pump.



Scan here to learn more about what an air-source heat pump can do for you or visit [ValueofElectricity.com](https://www.valueofelectricity.com).



Scan here to learn more about the off-peak program.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BOARDROOM

These are the highlights from the Jan. 3, 2024, regular board meeting. All board members were in attendance, with the exception of Director Nygaard. In addition to routine actions, the board voted to approve the 2024 budget and to approve all North Star board members as delegates to the Minnkota and Square Butte annual meetings.

Staff reports included the safety report, the 2024 budget, annual conflict of interest reporting for the IRS 990, the recent GridEx training attended by two co-op employees, the monthly financial report, new services, service upgrades, service retirements, pole changeouts, idle service inspections, right-of-way spraying and clearing, the Minnesota DOT's road move project between

Loman and Indus, outages, winter load control, ripple receiver inspections and repairs, solar installations, off-peak installations, rebates, building repairs, power theft, and mutual aid provided to Nodak Electric to help with winter storm damage recovery, including three linemen, a bucket truck and a digger-derrick truck.

Detailed minutes are available at the cooperative for member review. Regular board meetings are generally held the first Wednesday of every month (654-31-012-02, Sergey Sarkisyan). 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.

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 \$500 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. The odds are good based on the number of students who typically compete.

Over the past five years, your electricity prices have remained stable while the average U.S. ground beef prices have increased by **29%**.



**ELECTRICITY –
DELIVERING A
POWERFUL
VALUE EACH
AND EVERY DAY.**



OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President
Steve Arnesen

Vice President
Michael Hanson

**Secretary-
Treasurer**
Lorraine Nygaard

Directors
Shelley Spears
Randy Bergan
Tom Smith
Douglas King

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.

ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG: 811 or 800-252-1166.
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
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

STAFF REPORT – REDESIGNED SMARTHUB WEBSITE



Robyn Sonstegard
*Manager of Finance &
Administration*

Capital credit allocation

In February, your board of directors approved the allocation of 2023 operating margins of \$1,050,259 to our members' capital credit accounts. Your own portion of this allocation is based on how much electricity you purchased during the year. You will see your share of these 2023 margins printed on your electric bill this month in the Additional Information area.

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 past years. This refund to you is what dividends are to stockholders at for-profit companies. The difference is that we don't aim to make a profit. Our goal is to provide you with electricity that is as close to cost as possible, so more of your money stays in your pocket!

A portion of the electric bill you pay each month goes into building infrastructure – poles, wire and transformers – that bring you a steady and reliable supply of power (242-25-002-04, Arthur Ketola). When we allocate capital credits, you receive the credit for helping to grow and support your local electric cooperative!

Redesigned SmartHub®

A recent redesign of our SmartHub website went live on Feb. 14. SmartHub now has a fresh look with a simplified, user-friendly design. The home screen has a streamlined presentation with a new menu and easier navigation. If you are new to SmartHub, you can use it to view or pay your bill, set up usage notifications, and track and compare your energy usage! There are a few new features implemented with the redesign, which will allow you to make changes to your contact information or send us inquiries about your bill, capital credits or other miscellaneous topics. If you have a SmartHub login, be sure to check it out online, as the redesign only affects the web version, not the app. Also remember that you can use the online version or the app to report if your power is out – although the online version on your computer might not do you any good if you have no power – so remember to install the app on your phone if you haven't already! Find the SmartHub link on our website at northstarelectric.coop.



ENERGY SAVING TIP

**Lengthen the life of your clothes
dryer with regular cleaning.
Clean the lint filter after every
load, and occasionally check
and clean the lint trap opening.**

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

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

STATE OF MINNESOTA LEGISLATORS

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King,
Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-201-3400

Minority Leader
Senator Mark Johnson (01, R)
2401 Minnesota Senate
Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-5782
sen.mark.johnson@senate.mn

Senator Steve Green (02, R)
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(03, DFL)
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651-296-1789
sen.grant.hauschild@senate.
mn

Representative Matt Grossell
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St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-4265
rep.matt.grossell@house.mn

Representative Matt Bliss
(02B, R)
311 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
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.

ST. LOUIS and KOOCHICHING COUNTIES

Keith Tillotson
218.245.9087

Call to set up an appointment
7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m., Monday - Friday

LAKE OF THE WOODS and ROSEAU COUNTIES

Ronald Ditsch
651.368.2195

Call to set up an appointment
7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m., Monday - Friday

HOME COOKING

Southwestern Lasagna

Give a pasta favorite new appeal with ground beef, cheese, veggies and other south-of-the-border ingredients layered between tortillas and baked to perfection.

Prep Time	Cook Time	Total Time	Servings
40 mins	30 mins	1 hr, 10 mins	6-8

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ lbs hamburger
- 1 medium onion
- 1 can (15 oz) enchilada sauce
- 1 can (14½ oz) tomatoes, *undrained*
- 1 can sliced black olives, *drained*
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 cup cottage cheese
- 1 egg
- 8 corn tortillas, *halved*

- ½ lb Monterey Jack cheese, *thinly sliced*
- ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large skillet, brown beef and onion.
2. Stir in enchilada sauce, tomatoes, olives, salt, garlic powder, and pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, simmer uncovered for 20 minutes.
3. In a small bowl, mix cottage cheese and egg. Set aside.

4. Spread ⅓ of meat sauce in a greased cake pan.
5. Top with half of the Monterey Jack cheese, half the cottage cheese mixture and half the tortillas. Repeat layers ending with the meat sauce.
6. Sprinkle with cheddar cheese. Cover with foil and bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Uncover and bake 10 minutes longer.

From the kitchen of Marge Block.



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 Cooperative donates unclaimed capital credits to local charitable programs and organizations



Lorraine Nygaard, North Star Electric board director (*right*), presents an unclaimed capital credit check to Christine Burmeister with the Littlefork Ambulance Thrift Shop.

"Commitment to community is a driving force behind your cooperative as we support programs that improve the lives of those who live in the communities we serve."

UPCOMING DATES/EVENTS

29
MAR

North Star's Baudette and Littlefork offices will be closed on Friday, March 29, in observance of Good Friday and the Easter holiday.

10
APR

North Star will hold its next monthly board meeting on Wednesday, April 10, in Grand Forks, N.D. Please contact us ahead of time if you would like to be added to the agenda.

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 spring season and other useful information.

 /northstarelectric

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.