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## **NATIONAL LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY**

APRIL 8, 2024

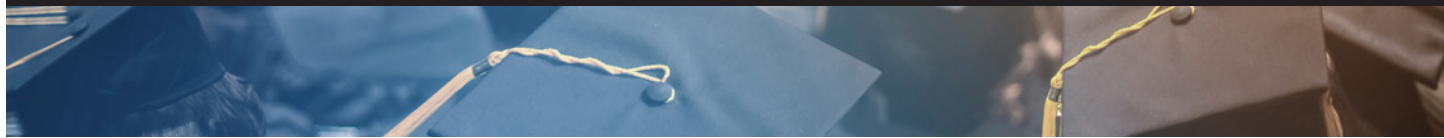
*Learn more about  
your cooperative's  
lineworkers on page 2.*

Their work is dangerous.  
Their stakes are high.  
Their hours are long.  
Their mission is service.  
Their commitment is enduring.  
Our gratitude is eternal.

Thank a North Star  
Electric Cooperative  
lineworker.

### **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.



# PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS – KNOWLEDGE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

**ONE \$1,000 scholarship and FOUR \$500 scholarships**

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 (140-17-011-03, Acey A. Olson). 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.



**In order for a student to qualify:**

- ▶ The parent/guardian must be a member of North Star Electric Cooperative
- ▶ Student must be a 2024 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 and call us at North Star if you have any questions!*

# THANK A NORTH STAR ELECTRIC LINEWORKER

*National Lineworker Appreciation Day – April 8, 2024*

When the storm hits and the lights go out, they work until the power is restored. They dedicate their lives to serving our communities on the hottest days of summer and the darkest days of winter. Every day, moments of our lives are powered by their hard work and determination to provide the most reliable energy possible. On April 8, thank a lineworker for their vital service to our region and our homes. Keeping the lights on is just what they do.



**Thank you to our lineworkers!** Pictured from left to right: Nathan Zortman, Preston Kennedy, Eli Rahier, Blake Huwe, Jesse Huot, Todd Higgins, Josh Hamm, Travis Pederson, Todd Thydean and Nick Horne.



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BOARDROOM

These are the highlights from the Feb. 7, 2024, regular board meeting. All board members were in attendance. In addition to routine actions, the board voted to approve the allocation of 2023 operating margins to the members' capital credit accounts; to approve the transfer of final unpaid delinquent bills from current accounts receivable to the reserve for uncollectible; to approve all North Star board members as delegates to the Minnkota and Square Butte annual meetings; to approve moving the March board meeting to Feb. 28, 2024, to accommodate a schedule conflict; and to approve moving the April board meeting to April 10, 2024, in Grand Forks, to coincide with the timing and location of

the Minnkota membership meeting and the Minnkota and Square Butte annual meetings.

Staff reports included the safety report, the monthly financial report, bad debt write-offs, the 2023 capital credit allocation, service upgrades, service retirements, contracted right-of-way clearing, the Ash Lake work plan project this coming summer, the USIC Locating Services contract, the MREA apprenticeship program, the AMI metering system, outages, winter load control, billing demand measurements, ripple receiver inspections and repairs, solar inquiries, off-peak installations, merchandise sales, rebates and the

recent Operation Round Up® board meeting.

Detailed minutes are available at the cooperative for member review. Regular board meetings are generally held the first Wednesday of every month (251-21-069-04, Gregory D. Johnson). 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 SAVING TIP**  
Looking for an easy way to manage home energy use? Smart plugs are inexpensive and offer convenient solutions for scheduling and controlling your favorite electronic devices so you can save energy (and money).



Over the past five years, your electricity prices have remained stable while the average U.S. chicken prices have increased **30%**.

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

 VALUE OF ELECTRICITY

## 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](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)

# VOICES FOR GRID RELIABILITY

By **Minnkota Power Cooperative** – North Star Electric’s wholesale power provider

**A**s the nation’s electric grid faces escalating reliability risks, energy leaders are making their voices heard.

Regulators, grid operators, utilities and others are continuing to sound the alarm on the United States transitioning too quickly toward intermittent resources without retaining the stability provided by baseload coal, nuclear and natural gas power plants. As

more dependable power plants are retired without adequate replacement, the margin for error is becoming razor thin – a dire situation that has the potential to lead to blackouts.

As the United States grapples with the challenges to the reliability of its electric grid, the need for proactive and decisive action is more apparent than ever (654-32-003-06, Ted C. Olson). Failure to address these challenges could

have far-reaching consequences, impacting not only the nation’s energy landscape but also its economic stability and overall security.

The entities responsible for grid reliability must join together to find collaborative solutions to these issues and work toward a set of reasonable and achievable goals for the energy transition. Here’s what some of the major entities responsible for reliability are saying.



## MIDWEST RELIABILITY ORGANIZATION (MRO)

### What they’re saying:

“Headlining the regional risk is uncertain energy availability, which was elevated from a high risk in 2023 to an extreme risk in 2024. This is the first time in the assessment’s history that a risk has risen to an extreme priority. A reliable bulk power system requires generating resources to produce the necessary amount of energy to manage electricity demand at any given time. The energy mix is rapidly transforming to include more energy-limited resources that have uninsured fuel supplies, challenging the ability to provide power on demand.”

— Mark Tiemeier, MRO Principal Technical Advisor, 2024 MRO Regional Risk Assessment Report

## MINNKOTA POWER COOPERATIVE (MPC)

### What they’re saying:

“People use the phrase ‘keeping the lights on,’ but it’s so much more than that. It’s keeping families warm in the winter, helping American businesses stay competitive, ensuring hospitals and essential resources are available at all times and protecting our national security. These are things that depend on a reliable electric grid and we should take that seriously.”

— Mac McLennan, Minnkota president and CEO, October 9, 2023, article





## NORTH AMERICAN ELECTRIC RELIABILITY CORPORATION (NERC)

### What they're saying:

"The electric power industry continues to face challenges in the future. A rapidly changing resource mix, a threat landscape, extreme weather, inverter-based resources. But really focusing in on reliability, managing the pace of a rapidly changing resource mix, which includes not only making sure you don't retire prematurely, but also that we're building enough resources and making sure they're dispatchable really continues to be our greatest reliability risk in the future."


— John Moura, NERC Director of Reliability Assessment and Performance Analysis, Fox interview on Dec. 13, 2023

## MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION (MNPUC)

### What they're saying:

"A major reliability event will set us backwards. The public will absolutely revolt."

— Joe Sullivan, vice chairman of MNPUC, at a conference hosted by the Minnesota Solar Energy Industries Association, on Oct. 9, 2023 (courtesy MinnPost)




## MIDCONTINENT INDEPENDENT SYSTEM OPERATOR (MISO)

### What they're saying:

"The recent acceleration in the pace of fleet change is increasing risks to system reliability for MISO. Dispatchable generators that we need to ensure reliability are being removed from the system before new resources with the needed reliability attributes are being brought online."

— Todd Ramey, MISO senior vice president of markets and digital strategy, at a House Subcommittee on Energy, Climate and Grid Security hearing on Sept. 28, 2023



## FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION (FERC)

### What they're saying:

"We are heading for potentially very dire consequences, potentially catastrophic consequences in the United States in terms of the reliability of our grid."

— Mark Christie, FERC commissioner, at a House Energy and Commerce Committee, Energy Subcommittee hearing on June 13, 2023

## NORTH DAKOTA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (NDPSC)

### What they're saying:

"We're talking about these reliability challenges in a nation that is so blessed with an abundant array of affordable, reliable energy resources like America is, it really doesn't seem plausible that we should ever fall short. Yes, we have storms. Yes, there are power outages. That's going to happen. But not having enough? That should never happen. Ever."

— Julie Fedorchak, NDPSC commissioner, at National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners' annual meeting in November 2023



# 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 – RIGHT OF WAY AND POLE TESTING



**Tim Pelach**  
*Manager of Operations*

Greetings, everyone. Well, just when it looked like spring had arrived, the boat was out and the river was opening up, Mother Nature changed her mind and froze us up again. I am not complaining, as I have been getting a lot of spring cleanup done while the ground is frozen with no snow. Now as I sit here writing this it is snowing outside, and at this point I kind of wish it was just rain so we can get on with spring. I sure hope it doesn't drag out like last year.

As far as crew work for the winter, it has been very beneficial for getting around and accomplishing needed work without battling snow conditions.

The Baudette crews have been able to replace almost all of the rejected poles from our pole testing last fall, with just a few remaining with underground coming off of them that we will get done when the frost leaves. They will be getting busy finishing up the cable replacement project between Birchdale and Indus this spring as conditions deteriorated fast last fall (783-33-010-07, Ashley Germain). This will be in addition to the new service activity that is already starting to mount up.

The Littlefork crews have made a lot of progress on our right-of-way clearing this winter, which will surely help with the outages this summer when the leaves show up on the trees.

This summer we are having Wright Tree Service as a contractor spraying our right of way around the International Falls and Kabetogama area, so some of you will be getting contacted by them if you haven't already. We also have a line replacement project on the Ash River Trail this summer converting overhead to underground. The contractors will be back soon to finish the flood recovery project around the lakes area along with a line upgrade project near Rainy Lake for a Midco broadband expansion.

It is my understanding that construction on the roundabout on Highways 53 and 332 will start June 1, and we have some work to do there to accommodate that, so we are hoping to be done by then. The crew has also been working on our meter reading system, putting up two new collectors in the Ash Lake and Ash River areas to help get the monthly readings.

That's all for now, Tim

## Don't let controlled burns backfire this spring season!

### HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN PLANNING FOR A CONTROLLED BURN:

- 1 Keep things like the temperature, humidity and wind speed in mind when planning a controlled burn. Check the radar before beginning a fire.
- 2 **DO NOT** start a fire near power poles. Burning poles can cause widespread outages and could be costly for the individual who set the fire.
- 3 Cut grass and weeds, and water areas near any power poles to keep the fire from approaching.
- 4 If a pole does catch fire, call 9-1-1 and your local co-op right away. Even if you can put the fire out yourself, the pole could still be burning from the inside and become extremely hazardous.



# 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  
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www.klobuchar.senate.gov  
202-224-3244;  
Fax: 202-228-2186

Senator Tina Smith  
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www.smith.senate.gov  
202-224-5641

Congresswoman Michelle  
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fischbach.house.gov  
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Fax: 202-225-1593

Congressman Pete Stauber,  
U.S. House (8th District)  
145 Cannon House Office  
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202-225-6211

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Jr. Blvd.  
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651-296-4265  
rep.matt.grossell@house.mn

Representative Matt Bliss  
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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](http://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

### Bennigan's Baked Potato Soup

An easy and delicious creamy potato soup recipe that can be made in just one pot. Loaded with cheese, bacon and potato goodness, this is a favorite comfort food.

Prep Time	Cook Time	Total Time	Servings
10 mins	1 hr, 20 mins	1 hr, 30 mins	8

#### INGREDIENTS

- 3 lbs all-purpose potatoes
- 1 Tbsp butter
- 1½ cups finely chopped onions
- 2 Tbsp minced garlic
- 1 can (14½ oz) chicken broth
- 3 cups milk
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- Shredded cheddar cheese
- Crumbled bacon
- Chopped scallions

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Scrub potatoes and rinse them in cold water.
2. Pierce potatoes by poking each one in several places with a skewer and then wrap separately in foil. Arrange them on a cookie sheet and bake for one hour. Remove from the heat and allow them to cool.
3. In large pot, melt butter over medium-low heat. Stir in onions and garlic, then cover and cook for 10 minutes until the onions become soft and transparent, but do not let them brown.

4. Add about ⅔ of the potatoes and mash with a potato masher until soft. Add the broth, milk, salt and pepper. Increase the heat and allow the mixture to simmer, stirring occasionally.
5. Cut the remaining potatoes in small cubes. Add to soup and stir gently to reheat. Allow to simmer a few minutes more to help thicken soup.
6. Sprinkle each bowl of soup with shredded cheddar cheese, bacon and scallions to taste.

*From the kitchen of Shari Pelach.*



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

# It's National Safe Digging Month

Before you start planning any outdoor projects this spring, don't forget to **CALL BEFORE YOU DIG.**



**CAN YOU  
DIG IT?**

## Call 8-1-1 before you...

Put in a  
**MAILBOX**



Plant a  
**GARDEN**



Build a  
**DECK**



Add a  
**FENCE**



Ready to begin your next backyard addition?  
Visit **call811.com** to get started on your safe digging online request form today!

## UPCOMING DATES/EVENTS

**01  
MAY**

North Star will hold its next monthly board meeting on Wednesday, May 1. Please contact us ahead of time if you would like to be added to the agenda.

**27  
MAY**

North Star's Baudette and Littlefork offices will be closed on Monday, May 27, in observance of the Memorial Day holiday.

### 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** 1-888-60OUTAGE (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.*