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OPERATION ROUND UP®

CONTINUES TO HELP LOCAL PROGRAMS



NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COMMUNITY TRUST BOARD

(Left to right): Larry Warrington, Marjie Sporlein (*treasurer*), Gretchen Thompson (*vice president*), Marlin Ravndalen, Mary Ellen Lehman, Angela Boes (*president*) and Bruce Turban.

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NORTH STAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. MISSION STATEMENT

Providing safe, reliable electric services to improve the quality of life in communities we serve.



OPERATION ROUND UP®

CONTINUES TO HELP LOCAL PROGRAMS

The North Star Electric Community Trust board met in July to review the Operation Round Up® applications, which it received requesting funding for various programs. The board awarded \$9,484, 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. To date, \$388,384 has been awarded to area programs and organizations.

Organizations from the area may apply for a donation from the Operation Round Up Trust (Bruce Burton, 132-02-004-01). The applicant must be charitable in nature and be working to meet a need in our area. 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 North Star Electric Community Trust board meeting, \$9,484 in Operation Round Up funds was distributed to various qualifying programs and organizations in the area, including:

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM	GRANT
Northern Lights Council	Provide scouting to youth in Baudette	\$ 600.00
Baudette Scouting America Scout Troop 62	License seven canoes and minor repairs	\$ 500.00
Lake of the Woods County Historical Society	Semiquincentennial contest	\$ 500.00
Servants of Shelter Koochiching County	Frozen microwaveable meals	\$ 1,000.00
Depot Preservation Alliance	Build a Smash Burger community event	\$ 509.00
Bethany Lutheran Church	Emergency storm shelter elevator repairs	\$ 1,000.00
Wishes & More	Wishes and Scholarships of Hope for Ethan	\$ 1,000.00
Williams Senior Citizens Day Center	Senior Meal Program	\$ 1,000.00
Littlefork-Big Falls 2nd Grade	Becoming Authors book project	\$ 625.00
Koochiching County Sheriff's Office	Unmanned Aerial System (DRONE)	\$ 500.00
United Way of Northeastern Minnesota	Imagination Library	\$ 250.00
Koochiching Aging Options	Senior Wheels (mileage reimbursement)	\$ 500.00
Littlefork Community Theater	Play rights, scripts, costumes, props and sets	\$ 500.00
Big Falls Community Food Shelf	Food and hygiene products	\$ 1,000.00

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BOARDROOM

These are the highlights from the June 3, 2026, regular board meeting. All board members were in attendance. The board approved routine actions at this meeting.

Staff reports included the safety report, monthly financial report, the upcoming financial audit, the Baudette office job opening, summer demand response testing, voltage and signal strength testing, ripple receiver inspections and repairs, scholarships, safety demonstrations at local schools, the Minnkota Watts Up orientation program for new cooperative employees, the metering system, Generlink and generator sales, water heater sales, rebates, idle service retirements, new services, the Kabetogama work plan job, right-of-way spraying in the Warroad area, the Kettle Falls cable replacement project, the hiring of new operations department employees, outages, member appreciation days, the gas line project from western to eastern North Dakota, and the potential of

shared services between Minnkota and its member cooperatives.

Detailed minutes are available at the cooperative for member review. Regular board meetings are generally held on the first Wednesday of every month (Kent Drayer, 373-12-016-03). 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.

For **8 cents**, you can spend an hour on the treadmill hitting your daily step goal.

For less than **1 cent** more, you can finish off the workout by blending your favorite smoothie.

THAT'S THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY



*Based on average household energy usage

ANNUAL MEETING SAVE THE DATE



Mark your calendars for North Star Electric's annual meeting to be held on **FRIDAY, OCT. 2, 2026**, indoors at Lake of the Woods School. As an electric co-op member, you have the power to help shape our energy future.

UPCOMING DATES/EVENTS

12
AUG

North Star Electric will hold its next monthly board meeting on Wednesday, Aug. 12. Please contact us ahead of time if you would like to be added to the agenda.

07
SEPT

North Star's Baudette and Littlefork offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 7, in observance of the Labor Day holiday.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President
Steve Arnesen

Vice President
Michael Hanson

Secretary-Treasurer
Shelley Spears

Directors
Randy Bergan
Richard Ferguson
Douglas King
Tim Mathews

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

NORTH STAR BOOTH AT LOCAL FAIRS

The LOW County Fair was held in Baudette on June 25-27, 2026

The Northern MN District Fair was held in Littlefork on July 9-11, 2026

PRIZE WINNERS

Baudette:

GRAND PRIZE (YETI cooler) -
Gretchen Thompson

\$50 bill credit - *Nate Schuman*

\$50 bill credit - *Crystal Ferrier*

\$50 bill credit - *John Paulsen*

Littlefork:

GRAND PRIZE (YETI cooler) -
Tom O'Connel

\$50 bill credit - *Brian Bird*

\$50 bill credit - *Angela Hoopman*

\$50 bill credit - *Sharon Little*



Gretchen Thompson was the grand prize winner of a YETI cooler at the fair in Baudette.



Tom O'Connel was the grand prize winner of a YETI cooler at the fair in Littlefork.





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



AT THE CAPITOL: WORKING TO KEEP YOUR POWER AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE



The 2026 Minnesota legislative session has wrapped up at the Capitol, and there's plenty for cooperative member-owners to know about how the session affected the energy that powers your home, farm or business.

It was a session shaped by divided government. With a tied House, a one-seat Senate majority and an election looming in November, every bill needed bipartisan agreement to move. Even so, Minnesota's electric cooperatives made important progress on the issues that matter most to member-owners. The session delivered a meaningful step forward on nuclear energy and stopped several costly proposals before they could become law.

A step forward on nuclear energy

After three decades of standing still, Minnesota took its first real step forward on nuclear energy.

Lawmakers approved a state nuclear energy study, the most significant movement on the issue since Minnesota's nuclear moratorium was put in place in 1994. The moratorium itself remains on the books, but the study reflects a growing recognition at the Capitol that nuclear power deserves a serious look as the state works toward its carbon-free electricity goals.

The study itself will examine the costs, benefits and tradeoffs of

nuclear energy in Minnesota, including its potential role in supporting affordability, reliability and emissions reductions. Its findings will give lawmakers a stronger foundation for deciding whether to lift the moratorium next year.

Holding the line on costly new mandates

Just as important as what passed is what didn't.

Several proposals introduced this session would have added new costs, new mandates or new layers of regulation onto Minnesota's electric cooperatives. None of them became law, and that outcome wasn't an accident.

Throughout the session, Minnesota's electric cooperatives worked to educate legislators about how mandates from St. Paul affect locally governed, not-for-profit cooperatives differently than they do large investor-owned utilities. Bills touching on solar policy, affordability mandates and utility operations all stalled before reaching the finish line. Cooperative priorities like net metering reform also saw little movement, leaving important work for future sessions.

That distinction matters because cooperatives are governed by the members they serve. Decisions about your electricity are made by neighbors you can talk to, not regulators in St. Paul. One-size-fits-all mandates often raise costs, undermine that local democracy and add bureaucracy without delivering real benefits to member-owners. Stopping bad policy rarely makes headlines, but it remains critically important to the members we serve.

STAFF REPORT – CO-OP REMINDERS



Robyn Sonstegard
Finance Manager

Capital credit refunds

In early September, look for your capital credit refund on your electric bill. What are capital credits? To put it very simply, capital credits mean cash back over time. We are a non-profit cooperative, and after the bills are paid, we return any excess revenue, or margin, to our members. Due to the good financial standing of the cooperative, your board of directors authorized a capital credit retirement of \$399,518 this year. The refund you receive will be your share of this retirement.

MyMeter

We want to let you know that our MyMeter platform will soon be discontinued, **ending on Sept. 30, 2026**. The good news is that if you were using MyMeter for electric usage notifications, you can also set up usage notifications in SmartHub®.

If you are new to SmartHub, it provides many convenient features, including access to your energy usage, billing information and customizable usage alerts. You can also pay your bill from SmartHub!

If you used MyMeter notifications and already have a SmartHub account, simply log in and update your notification preferences in SmartHub. If you have not yet registered, please create your account to continue receiving usage notifications (James Kennedy, 556-05-003-03). You can find the SmartHub link on our website at nse.coop. If you need assistance setting up SmartHub or have any questions, please contact our office at **218-634-2202** and we'd be happy to help!

Annual meeting

One last item: Please mark your calendar for our next annual meeting, to be held the evening of **Oct. 2**, at the Lake of the Woods School in Baudette! Planning is underway, so stay tuned to next month's Enlightener for more information!

Until next time, Robyn

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

Brian Johnson
612.757.9458

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

Rocky Road Fluff

This no-bake dessert salad is rich and chocolatey and loaded with marshmallows and nuts. Enjoy every decadent and creamy bite.

Prep Time	Chill Time	Total Time	Servings
10 mins	1 hour	1 hour, 10 mins	8

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (3.4-ounce) box instant chocolate fudge pudding mix
- 1 cup cold milk
- 1 (8-ounce) container Cool Whip
- 1½ cups mini marshmallows
- ¾ cup mini chocolate chips, *plus extra*

- ¾ cup slivered almonds, *plus extra*

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk cold milk into the pudding mix in a large bowl until dissolved and thick and no lumps remain.
2. Fold in the Cool Whip until combined.
3. Stir in the mini marshmallows, mini chocolate chips and almonds.
4. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour before serving.
5. Sprinkle extra mini chocolate chips and slivered almonds on top and serve.

Recipe submitted by: Rachel Tomczak

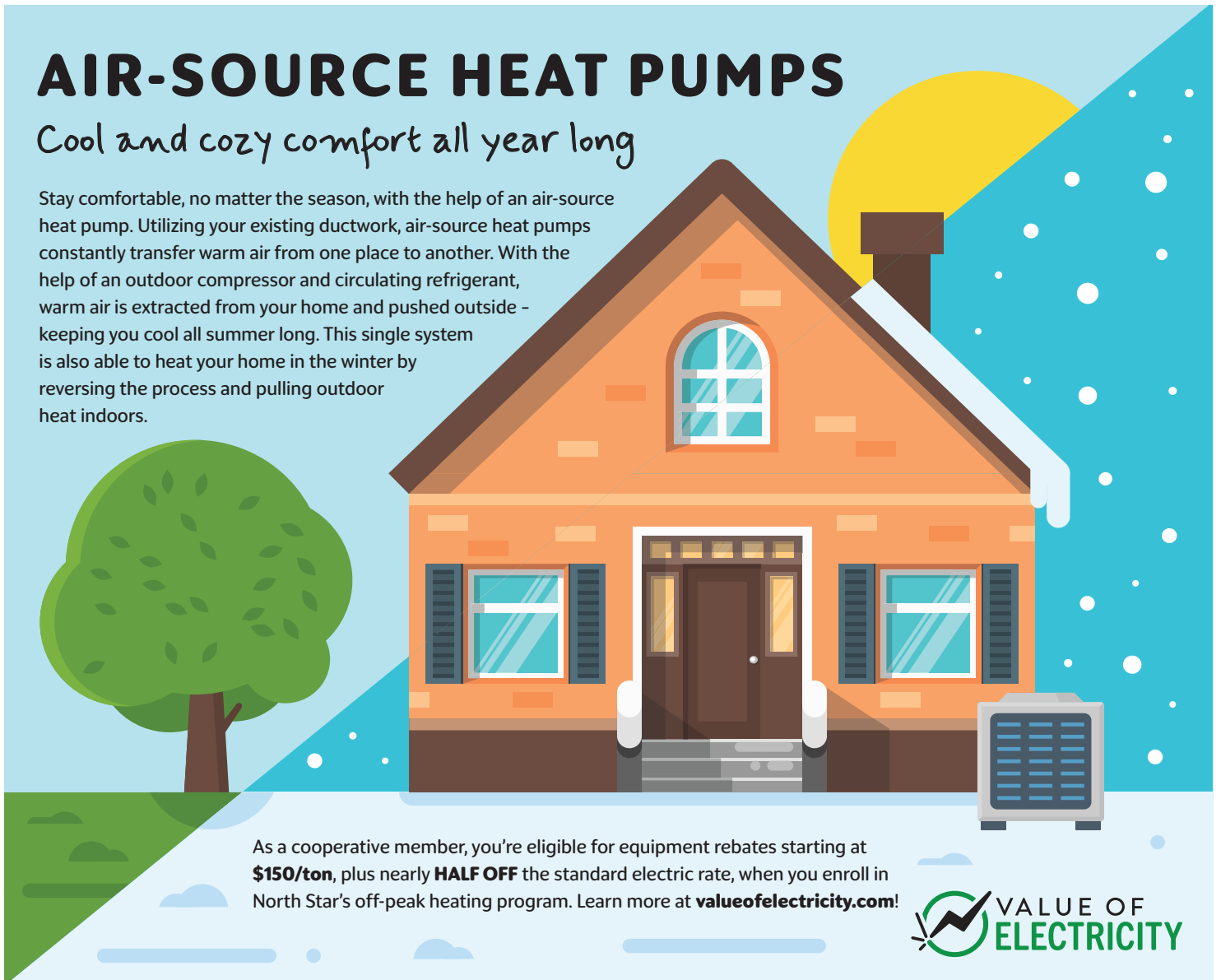


Receive a \$20 energy credit if you submit a recipe and it is selected to run in a future issue of the Enlightener newsletter.

AIR-SOURCE HEAT PUMPS

Cool and cozy comfort all year long

Stay comfortable, no matter the season, with the help of an air-source heat pump. Utilizing your existing ductwork, air-source heat pumps constantly transfer warm air from one place to another. With the help of an outdoor compressor and circulating refrigerant, warm air is extracted from your home and pushed outside - keeping you cool all summer long. This single system is also able to heat your home in the winter by reversing the process and pulling outdoor heat indoors.



As a cooperative member, you're eligible for equipment rebates starting at **\$150/ton**, plus nearly **HALF OFF** the standard electric rate, when you enroll in North Star's off-peak heating program. Learn more at valueofelectricity.com!



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 855-938-3492 | **Online billing** info available via SmartHub app

Electrical after-hours emergencies 1-888-6OUTAGE (1-888-668-8243)

Email us at nsec@wktel.com | **Visit our website at** northstarelectric.coop

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

 [**/northstarelectric**](https://www.facebook.com/northstarelectric)

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