



# Volts and Jolts

Published monthly for the members of  
**RED LAKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, Inc.**

*One of the Minnkota Power Systems*

**SERVING THE FOUR-COUNTY AREA OF MARSHALL, PENNINGTON, RED LAKE AND POLK**  
*and a portion of the lands of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa*

VOL. 49 – NO. 5

RED LAKE FALLS (RED LAKE COUNTY), MINNESOTA 56750

FEBRUARY 2014

## Operation Round Up grant applications due March 6

Organizations involved in community projects and charities are encouraged to apply for funds from Operation Round Up at this time. Completed grant applications are due in the Red Lake Electric Cooperative (RLEC) office by March 6th.

Operation Round Up is a program adopted by RLEC headquartered in Red Lake Falls. Members choosing to "round up" their monthly electric bill payment provide funds for this effort. Today 91 percent of RLEC members now choose to contribute pennies each month to enhance their communities.

Funds will be donated primarily



to nonprofit organizations to help fund specific projects or programs. Since the program began in 1993, \$420,000 has been granted to community organizations and charities. Money is donated for the betterment of the community within the outside service area boundaries of RLEC.

The Red Lake Electric Trust

Board of Directors determines grants. Board members are Patty Mickelson, Oklee; Van Swanson, Thief River Falls; Randy Knutson, Newfolden; Roger Johannek, RLF and Bonnie Christians, Crookston.

To apply for Operations Round Up grants, organizations should contact the RLEC office at 218-253-2168 or 800-245-6068. A short application must be completed and submitted along with a financial statement from the organization. The grant application form is available on the Cooperative's Web site: [www.redlakeelectric.com](http://www.redlakeelectric.com)

For more information contact Roger Johannek, general manager of RLEC, at 218-253-2168 or 800-245-6068.

## District meetings held recently

Three district meetings were held within Red Lake Electric Cooperative's (RLEC) service area the last week of January and the second week of February. Topics reviewed at the meetings included 2013 in review, the future and retail rate outlook, on-line bill pay, off-peak electric heat and LED lighting.

In his manager's report Roger Johannek discussed current year activities, citing a number of different accomplishments by the Cooperative in 2013. Johannek pointed out that retail rates have stabilized and discussed factors that are impacting the cost of wholesale power, how RLEC has kept distribution costs from increasing and the impact that environmental regulations and other legislation has had on providing serv-

ice to the membership.

Shirley Bregier, office manager, reported Minnkota Power Cooperative is now reading our substation meters on the last day of each month giving RLEC a chance to look at changing when your electric meter is read from the tenth of the month to the last day of the month. Bregier also reviewed the options to paying your electric bill which included the new Bill4U online payment option.

In the report from member services Kevin Reich shared how off-peak electric heat is much more economical for heating than propane. He also showed different examples of LED lighting and made mention the future of light is the LED.

The District 4 meeting was held the afternoon of January 27 at the Oklee Community Center.

Incumbent director, Steve Linder, Oklee, was unanimously elected as the district director candidate.

The afternoon of February 10 the District 1 meeting was held at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Gentilly.

Bonnie Christians, Crookston, incumbent director, was unanimously elected as the director candidate.

On the evening of February 10 the District 5 meeting was held at Community Church International, in rural Thief River Falls. Incumbent director, Mark Hanson, Thief River Falls, was unanimously elected as the director candidate of the district.

A total of 62 members and friends attended the three meetings. Door prizes were awarded and lunch was provided at each of the meetings.



District 1 meeting attendees asked several questions of Red Lake Electric staff during the meeting. The meeting was held February 10 at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Gentilly. Additional district meeting pictures appear on page 5 & 6.

## Control of off-peak electric heat is an "honor system"

### In this month's *Volts and Jolts*

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*Off peak Power, Sales Tax*

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Know how to stay safe during a power outage

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Warning: Don't bake all bulbs

Red Lake Electric Cooperative has over 2,200 off-peak electric heat installations throughout its service area. These systems have been put to the test this heating season with long term control systems experiencing 250 hours of load control. Red Lake Electric does have one means of monitoring if electric heating equipment is controlled during control periods, by means of the off-peak meter. The Cooperative has no means of making sure someone does not try to beat the system by using portable electric heaters during control periods.

If someone is plugging in portable electric heaters during control periods they may think they are beating the system, but in all reality they add additional costs to their electric bill and all of their fellow members.

During full load control periods, often Minnkota Power Cooperative, Red Lake Electric's wholesale electric supplier, is setting peak demands for billing purposes. These demands that are set play a (1119001.03 Gaylord A. Magner) major role in determining the wholesale price Red Lake Electric has to pay for electricity for the next 12 months. If someone is plugging in portable heaters, these heaters add to the Cooperative's demand and wholesale charges and in turn this is passed onto all members in retail rates. In other words, someone trying to beat the system actually is not.



We ask all of our off-peak heating customers to honor the load management agreement they have with Red Lake Electric. As intended, utilizing a non-electric heat source during periods of load control makes a difference in the Cooperative's wholesale power cost.

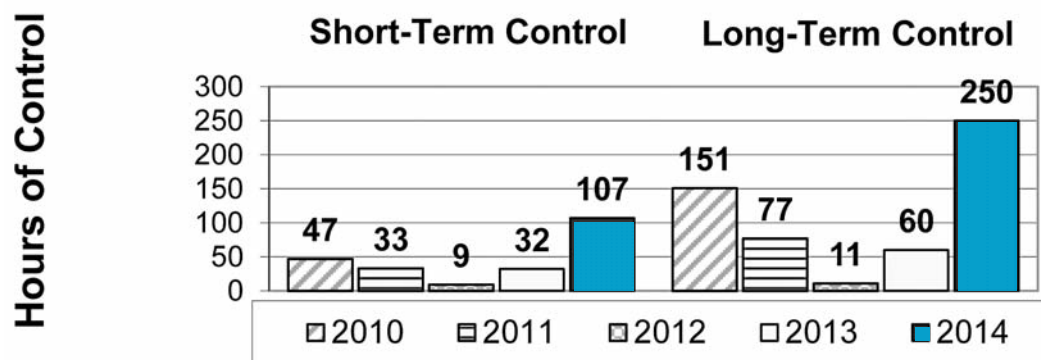
### QUICK TAKES

A look at some statistics from your Red Lake Electric Cooperative

The chart below shows the amount of control time for Red Lake Electric Cooperative's Off-Peak customers this heating season compared to the same period the past four years. The cold temps and an increase in systemwide demand for energy have contributed to more control hours this winter.

Also contributing to the control hours is a lack of wind so very little wind generation has occurred during the cold days when energy demand has been high.

### OFF-PEAK CONTROL HOURS through February 17th



## Off-peak electric heat compares very favorably to propane

The increased demand and shortage of propane throughout the Midwest has caused the price of propane to increase greatly over the past few months. At times propane has been over \$4 per gallon and delivery quantities were sometimes limited.

One of the best ways to manage your energy costs is with an off-peak electric heating system. Red Lake Electric Cooperative's current off-peak electric heat rate for long term control is 5.85 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh). At 100 percent efficiency, this compares to propane at approximately \$1.50 per gallon for a 95 percent efficient furnace. Couple a modulating electric heat source with an air-source heat pump and the electric system will achieve an annual efficiency of 200 percent. Under this scenario the off-peak rate is equivalent to propane at \$.75 per gallon for a 95 percent efficient furnace.

Yes, the electric heating equipment will be subject to control during peak demands and cold weather periods, but the electric heat will be available for at least 93 percent of the season's heating needs. This is based on 250 hours of load control throughout the heating season. If the control hours total less than 250 the electric heat will be available even a greater percentage.

A dual heating system allows you to switch from one fuel source to another making use of the most economical heating option.

For more information about Red Lake Electric's off-peak electric heating program contact the Cooperative at 218-253-2168 or 800-245-6068.

**An ideal heating system is an electric modulating plenum heater, coupled with an air-source heat pump, installed over a propane furnace.**



## Official Notice of Annual Meeting

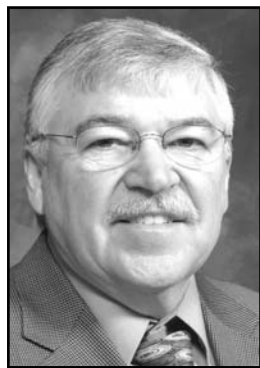
All members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc. are hereby notified of its annual meeting. The annual meeting will take place at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 26, 2014, at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls.

The meeting agenda includes year 2013 in review, financial reports and election of directors. Door prizes will be awarded and lunch will be served.

All members are encouraged to attend.

/s/ Mark Hanson, Secretary





## Manager's Comments

by Roger Johanneck



## 2014 Legislative Update

Each year in February or March, our statewide association, the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) holds its annual meeting in St. Paul. A good share of the annual meeting is devoted to hearing legislators talk about issues going on at that statewide level and from other presenters on topics from our industry. There is also a time set aside for attendees to visit the state capital building and visit with our area representatives on topics that may surface in the legislature. Instead of recreating the wheel this month about what those issues the Minnesota legislature may explore this session, I have included that list of possibilities covered in an article already written by MREA's Joel Johnson, Director of Government Affairs.

*Minnesota Legislature explores topics that may impact electric bills - By: Joel Johnson, MREA Government Affairs*

With the 2014 Legislative Session approaching, Minnesota electric cooperatives are preparing to work on a number of issues we believe will be important to our members. We don't expect the same focus on energy as last session. However, there are a number of issues worth talking about today.

Distributed Generation and Net Metering Electric cooperatives were specifically and intentionally exempted from 2013 legislation which established a 1.5 percent Solar Mandate for investor-owned utilities and also charged the Minnesota Department of Commerce with creating a Value of Solar rate to be paid to owners of solar generators.

However, Minnesota electric cooperatives continue to have concerns over the viability of Minnesota's current net metering laws. We have expressed a willingness to explore the idea of a Value of Solar (VOS) rate that allows a utility to recover the fixed and variable cost of its existing plant, and pays the owner of the distributed generation a fair price for the energy

they produce. We believe a legitimate VOS could accomplish the above mentioned goals if the design, in fact, reflects the true value of solar to all of the members of a utility and not a tariff designed primarily to incent the installation of solar around the state.

Because of that, we will again be advocating for legislative changes to the state's net metering laws that adhere to the following principles:

1. Net metering and distributed generation should be fair for all of our members and costs for using the grid should not be shifted onto neighbors.

2. Net-metered customers have a responsibility to pay for the services they use.

3. Payments for excess generation should be eliminated and replaced with rolled-over credits that expire after a year.

4. Generation should be properly sized to a consumer's load.

5. A system-wide cap on net metered accounts (based on overall system capacity) needs to be established to maintain the reliability and affordability of the electric distribution system.

### Conservation and Efficiency

We expect conservation, efficiency and the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) to be major topics of discussion at the Legislature in the upcoming session.

If the legislature wants to reform CIP, we believe the following goals should be pursued:

1. Continue to recognize that co-ops are different –CIP is one of the best examples of why one-size-fits-all policies don't work.

2. Challenge the status quo – CIP's design, particularly the reliance on rebates to quantify savings, isn't working for cooperatives. We believe we need to move away from rebating consumers for choices they would already be making and instead invest in things that will actually bring about real savings and economic development in our area.

### Stray Voltage

Minnesota continues to lead the country in the number of stray voltage cases landing in courts.

We believe the state needs to establish standards for measuring and mitigating stray voltage complaints – either through legislation or through a Public Utilities Commission ruling – as a way to help dairy farmers and avoid costly litigation. The standard would make utilities accountable if they didn't respond to complaints properly, but also protect them from frivolous complaints. We are considering a Legislative option to address the issue by tightening up the state's expert witness law.

### FEMA Reimbursement

We have been working on legislation that will streamline the state's disaster relief response to avoid the need for Special Sessions. As part of that, we want to make sure that electric cooperatives are eligible for state restoration funding. Work continues on this important legislation.

### Other issues under discussion:

Electric car charging rates: We support the idea of off-peak charging for electric cars. However, we do not believe that mandating that utilities establish a rate is necessary or good policy. That decision should be left to local boards.

Medically-necessary and life-saving equipment and disconnects: There will be an effort to expand the types of medical personnel who can certify that a consumer has life-saving or medically-necessary equipment that requires electricity to maintain health and where disconnecting the consumer would pose serious health threats. However, we are working on language to make sure that there is (3728019.01 Vergil H. Aubol) a time limit on these certifications and that consumers who aren't in financial crisis continue to pay their bills.



## Report from the Office

by Shirley Bregier

The district meetings have been held and we are now into planning the 76th Annual Meeting of Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc. At the meetings in Gentilly, Oklee and Thief River Falls I talked about the change to the day of the month when RLEC reads your electric meter. Currently your meter is read on the 10th of each month. We will be making a change to read the meter on the last day of each month. When we talk a month of usage we will be talking an actual calendar month not 20 days of one month and 10 days of another. Keep it simple, I have been told, and this is one way we can help do that.

Another task in getting ready for the Annual Meeting that we

do is to allocate the margins for 2013. We ended the year with Red Lake Electric margins of \$1,054,600 which we will be allocating to members who paid an electric bill to RLEC in 2013. As well as this allocation, your Board of Directors also approved the allocation of \$89,067 in capital credits from our G&T, Minnkota Power Cooperative. This assignment of capital credits will remain in each members equity account and will be used by the Cooperative to build new or rebuild aging infrastructure, improve capacity and operate the Cooperative. These capital credits reflect each member's ownership in the cooperative. With the audit of our 2013 financial records complete and

the approval of your board of directors, RLEC will be also be retiring 90% of the 1996 capital credit assignment for a total of about \$450,000. For the members who received a bill from RLEC during 1996 and still receiving an electric bill, this credit will be reflected on your March bill. If you no longer have an electric bill in your name, you will receive a check from Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc. during the last week in March.

Like always, if you have a question or concern please call our office at 1-800-245-6068 or e-mail us at redlake@minnkota.com. Enjoy the last days of winter and I hope to see you at the annual meeting on March 26th.

## VOTING DELEGATE CERTIFICATION

Members that are corporations, churches, townships, schools or other government units may vote at the annual meeting. This form designating the voting delegate must be filled out, signed by officers and presented at the annual meeting registration desk or returned with a mail ballot.

The \_\_\_\_\_ has, at an official  
Name of Member  
meeting, designated \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Delegate  
to represent us at the 2014 annual meeting of the Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Attest \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman or President

Attest \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk or Secretary

## Director nominations, petitions due Feb. 24

Each year the terms of three of Red Lake Electric Cooperative's (RLEC) directors expire the day of the annual meeting. Members of each of the three districts whose present director's terms will expire March 26 have elected director candidates at the recently held district meetings.

The names of the candidates are Bonnie Christians, Crookston, District 1, Steve Linder, Oklee, District 4 and Mark Hanson, Thief River Falls, District 5.

Their names will be placed in nomination at the annual meeting. Any other member within these districts wishing to have their name placed in nomination must do so by petition. The petition is due in the RLEC office in (4301005.12 Lois Brown) Red Lake Falls by 10 a.m. Feb. 24.

At least 15 members of the district must sign the petition for the director nominee. The nominee's name will then be placed on the election ballot at the annual meeting March 26 at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief

River Falls.

Petition forms are available at the RLEC office in Red Lake Falls. Contact Roger Johanneck, cooperative manager, at 800-245-6068 or 253-2168 for more information.

## RLEC director qualifications required to be elected/serve

No member shall be eligible to become or remain a director who:

- Is not a member of the Cooperative, receiving electric service at the member's primary residence in the district from which the director is elected.

- Within three years preceding a director candidate's nomination was an employee of the Cooperative.

- Is or becomes, or at any

time during the three (3) years preceding a director candidate's nomination shall have been employed by a labor union, which represents, or has represented, or has endeavored to represent any employees of the Cooperative.

- Is a parent, spouse or cohabitant of any employee of the Cooperative.

- Is a person who is a parent, spouse or cohabitant of an incumbent director who is not up for re-election at that time.

- Is in any way employed by or substantially financially interested in an enterprise competing with the Cooperative or any Cooperative-affiliated business.

- Is or becomes the full-time employee or agent of, or who is or becomes the full-time employer or principal of, another director.



**Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

*One of the Minnkota Power Systems*

## Things you should know about your electric service

### BILLINGS AND COLLECTION

You will receive your energy bill on or near the 20th of each month.

Payment of your monthly energy bill is due on the 20th of the month. You may pay your bill in person at RLEC during office hours, use the 24-hour drive-up drop box located next to the RLEC office, by Auto Pay, or by mail. Payment must be in the office, drop box, Auto Pay, or in the mail, as evidenced by the postmark, by the 5th day of the following month to avoid a late payment charge. A 1 1/2% monthly late payment charge will be computed on delinquent energy bills, the minimum late payment charge will be \$1.00.

If your payment is not received by the 15th of the month, a final notice of disconnection statement will be included on your following bill. The final notice statement will notify you when your electric service will be disconnected if the delinquent amount remains unpaid. If an employee is sent to disconnect your electric service, a \$60 collection fee will be charged to your account, even if you pay the collector.

To have a disconnected service reconnected, all amounts owing, a \$60 reconnection fee, and a security deposit must be paid. If the service must be reconnected after normal working hours, a \$120 reconnection fee must be paid.

### BAD CHECKS

A \$15 charge will be levied each time a check is returned because of nonsufficient funds, account being closed or payment stopped.

### OUTAGES

In case your electricity goes out, please do the following:

1. Check your fuses or breakers at the yard pole or meter pedestal.
2. Call your neighbor to see if they are out of electricity also.
3. Call the RLEC office (218-253-2168 or 1-800-245-6068) during working hours or 218-253-2200 after hours. We will accept collect calls for outages only.

### METER TESTS

RLEC has a schedule in place to have its meters periodically tested for accuracy. Results from these tests show that meters generally slow down with age; however, if you think that your meter is recording too much usage, RLEC will test it for accuracy. You must pay a test fee in advance of the test. If the meter test shows that the meter was inaccurate, the test fee will be refunded to you.

### STOPPED METERS

If you find your meter has stopped and you are using electricity, please contact the office immediately so we can replace it. Average consumption will be billed to the member for the time the meter was stopped so there is no advantage in not reporting a stopped meter.

### METER READINGS

An automated meter reading system is utilized to obtain monthly meter readings. Although the system is normally reliable, there is always a chance that the correct reading has not been transmitted to the office for billing. Customers should periodically read their meter and compare it to the reading on the billing statement. If the actual reading is not close to the billing statement reading, please call the office.

### GENERAL SERVICE RATES

Facilities charge variable \$27 to \$35 month  
April-December . . . . . 9.5¢ Kwh  
January-March . . . . . 9.9¢ Kwh

Multiphase users add \$22/month cost of service charge.

Standby, \$12/month (meter disconnected but the power line retained; standby is not available on services larger than 15 KVA transformer capacity).

Security light: high pressure sodium, \$8/month; mercury vapor, \$9/month; water heater flat credit, \$7/month (January-April billing); off-peak equipment charge, \$5.50/month per heat meter; off-peak energy rate: 5.5¢/kWh long-term control, 7.5¢/kWh short-term control.



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## RED LAKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, Inc.

## VOLTS & JOLTS

(USPS 663-400)

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PRESIDENT . . . . . Bonnie Christians  
VICE PRESIDENT . . . . . Robert Finstad  
SECRETARY-TREASURER . . . . . Mark Hanson  
DIRECTORS . . . . . Kelly Lundeen,

Steven Linder, Peter Mosbeck,  
Colette Kujava, Randy Versdahl,  
Stacy Blawat

**Subscription Rate \$2.50 per year**

## NOTICE

Hidden within the text of the articles of this issue of the Volts & Jolts are the names and account numbers of some RLEC members. They will appear within the articles in parenthesis as such (9999999.99 Roger P. Member). If you find your name and account number, clip it out and send it with your next payment. You will be credited with \$5 on your electric bill.



# Recipe Corner



## Hash Brown Potato Salad

- 5 bacon strips, diced
- 6 green onions, sliced
- 1 pkg. (1 pound) frozen cubed hash brown potatoes
- 1/4 c. white wine vinegar *or* cider vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. celery salt

Place bacon in a 1-1/2 qt. microwave-safe bowl. Cover and microwave on high for 5-6 minutes or until bacon is crisp. Remove with a slotted spoon to paper towels to drain. Add onions to the drip-pings; cover and microwave on high for 1 minute.

Add the potatoes; cover and cook on high in microwave for 10 minutes, stirring several times. Add vinegar, celery salt and bacon; toss.

**Yield:** 4 servings.

## Curried Chicken ‘N’ Broccoli

- 1 package (14 ounces) frozen broccoli florets, thawed
- 2 c. cooked chicken strips
- 1 can (10-3/4 ounces) condensed cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- 1/2 c. mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1/4 to 1/2 tsp. curry powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- Hot cooked rice

Place the broccoli in a 1-1/2 qt. microwave-safe dish. Top with the chicken. In a bowl, combine the soup, mayonnaise, lemon juice, curry powder and salt. Spoon over chicken. Sprinkle with cheese. Cover and microwave at 70% power for 8-10 minutes. Serve over rice.

**Yield:** 4 servings.

## Almond Bacon Chicken

- 4 bacon strips
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 can (10-3/4 ounces) condensed cream of onion soup, undiluted
- 1/4 c. chicken broth
- 1/4 c. sliced almonds, toasted

In a microwave, cook bacon on paper towels on high for 1-3 minutes or until partially cooked. Wrap a bacon strip around each chicken breast. Sprinkle with pepper. Arrange in an 8-in. square microwave-safe dish. Cover and microwave on high for 7 minutes; drain.

In a bowl, combine soup and broth; cover and microwave for 2 minutes. Spoon around chicken. Cook, uncovered, 5-7 minutes longer or until juices run clear. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving. Sprinkle with almonds.

**Yield:** 4 servings.

## Baked Garlic Chicken

- 1/3 c. mayonnaise\*
- 1/4 c. grated Parmesan cheese
- 3 to 4 Tbsp. savory herb with garlic soup mix
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves
- 2 Tbsp. dry bread crumbs

In a bowl, combine mayonnaise, Parmesan cheese and soup mix. Place the chicken in a greased 11-in.x7-in.x2-in. baking dish. Spread with the mayonnaise mixture. Sprinkle with bread crumbs. Bake, uncovered, at 400° for 20-25 minutes or until juices run clear and a meat thermometer reads 170.

**Yield:** 4 servings.

\*Note: Light or fat-free mayonnaise may not be substituted for regular mayonnaise.

## Salad with Buttermilk Dressing

- 3/4 c. buttermilk
- 3/4 c. mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp. minced fresh parsley
- 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. ground mustard
- 1/4 tsp. onion powder
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- Assorted salad greens, sweet yellow pepper strips and sliced cucumbers *or* vegetables of your choice

In a bowl, whisk together the first eight ingredients. Serve over greens and vegetables. Refrigerate leftover dressing.

**Yield:** 1-1/2 cups.

## Veggie Potato Salad

- 1 pound small red potatoes, cooked and cubed
- 1-1/2 c. chopped fresh broccoli
- 1/2 c. sliced celery
- 1/4 c. chopped red onion
- 1/4 c. sliced radishes
- 2 Tbsp. chopped green pepper
- 1/3 c. fat-free Italian salad dressing
- 1/2 tsp. salt-free seasoning blend
- 1/4 tsp. dill weed

In a large salad bowl, toss the potatoes and vegetables. In a small bowl, blend the salad dressing and seasonings; add to potato mixture and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or until serving.

**Yield:** 5 servings.

## Sunny Layered Salad

- 1/4 c. sliced almonds
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 6 c. shredded lettuce
- 1 can (8 ounces) sliced water chestnuts, drained
- 1 c. frozen peas, thawed and well drained
- 1/2 medium cucumber, sliced
- 2 medium tomatoes, cut into thin wedges
- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 can (15 ounces) mandarin oranges, drained
- DRESSING:**
- 1/4 c. vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 Tbsp. cider vinegar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper

In a skillet, cook and stir almonds and sugar over low heat until sugar is dissolved and almonds are coated. Spread almonds on waxed paper and set aside.

In a large glass salad bowl, layer the lettuce, water chestnuts, peas, cucumber, tomatoes, cheeses and oranges. Sprinkle with the sugared almonds. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine dressing ingredients; shake well. Pour over salad and serve immediately.

**Yield:** 10-12 servings.

## Moist Bran Muffins

- 2 c. All-Bran
- 1 c. plain fat-free yogurt
- 2/3 c. unsweetened applesauce
- 1/2 c. fat-free milk
- 1/2 c. egg substitute
- 1/3 c. packed brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. molasses
- 1 Tbsp. canola oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1-1/2 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. salt

In a bowl, combine the bran, yogurt, applesauce and milk; let stand for 5 minutes. Add egg substitute, brown sugar, molasses, oil and vanilla; mix well. In another bowl, combine the dry ingredients. Stir in bran mixture just until moistened.

Fill muffin cups coated with nonstick cooking spray two-thirds full. Bake at 400° for 15-20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks.

**Yield:** about 1-1/2 dozen.

# Hearts at Risk

## Blood pressure basics for American Heart Month

Healthy hearts face risks from many different factors: high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, tobacco use, an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and secondhand smoke, among others. But another common—and often misunderstood—risk factor is high blood pressure.

One in three Americans suffers from high blood pressure, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). With February designated as American Heart Month, now is a great time to understand more about this condition.

Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers, written as a ratio: 118/75 mm Hg. The top number, systolic, measures pressure in the arteries when a heart beats and the heart muscle contracts. The bottom number, diastolic, measures pressure in the arteries between heartbeats (when the heart muscle rests between beats and refills with blood).

The AHA lists five stages of blood pressure:

Normal: Systolic less than 120 and diastolic less than 80

Prehypertension: Systolic between 120-139 or diastolic between 80-89

High Blood Pressure Stage 1: Systolic between 140-159 or diastolic between 90-99

High Blood Pressure Stage 2: Systolic 160 and higher or diastolic 100 or higher

Hypertensive Crisis (emergency care needed): Systolic 180 and higher or diastolic 110 or higher

How is high blood pressure diagnosed?

Health care providers want an accurate picture of blood pressure to chart what happens over time. Starting at age 20,

AHA recommends a blood pressure screening at least once every two years.

If a patient's blood pressure reading comes in higher than normal, a doctor may take several readings over time and/or have the patient monitor blood pressure levels at home before diagnosing high blood pressure.

A single high reading does not necessarily translate to high blood pressure. However, if readings stay at 140/90 mm Hg or above (systolic 140 or above OR diastolic 90 or above) over time, a doctor will likely begin a treatment program. Such a program almost always includes lifestyle changes and often prescription medication.

If, while monitoring blood pressure, a patient notes a systolic reading of 180 mm Hg or higher OR a diastolic reading of 110 mm Hg or higher, the patient should wait a few minutes and try again. If the reading remains at or above that level, a patient should seek immediate emergency medical treatment for a hypertensive crisis.

Which number is more important, systolic (top) or diastolic (bottom)?

Typically, more attention is given to the top number (the systolic blood pressure) as a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease for people over 50. In most cases, systolic blood pressure rises steadily with age because of increasing stiffness of large arteries, long-term build-up of plaque, and increased incidence of cardiac and vascular disease.

To learn more, visit [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

## Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc. Operating Report

### MONTHLY COMPARISON

	DEC 2012	DEC 2013
Total Revenue .....	\$1,381,213	\$ 1,236,368
Total Margins .....	\$ 121,584	\$ 1,140,336
Cost of Power .....	\$1,004,776	\$ 1,023,263
KWH's Purchased .....	\$14,372,852	16,870,601
Capital Credits Paid to Estates ..	9,629	\$ 4,070

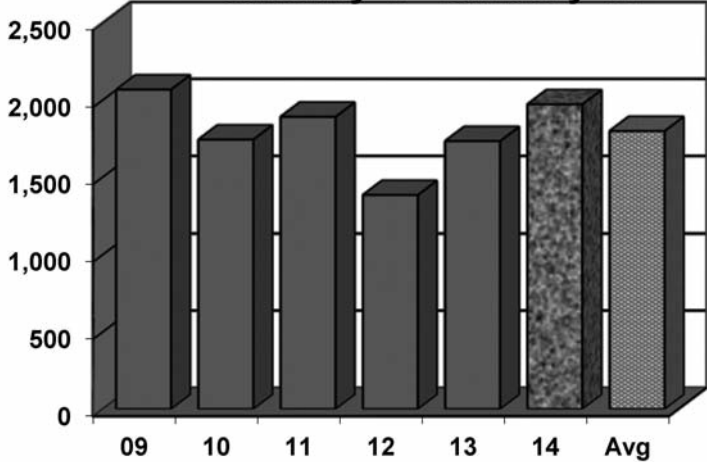
### YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON

	DEC 2012	DEC 2013
Total Revenue .....	\$13,220,032	\$13,636,983
Total Margins .....	\$ 774,937	\$ 1,140,335
Cost of Power .....	\$9,613,000	\$ 9,702,119
KWH's Purchased .....	130,225,072	144,849,402
New Service Connections .....	52	62
Customers Served .....	5,230	5,272
Capital Credits Paid to Estates ..	93,032	\$ 100,003
Miles of Line		
Overhead .....	2,323	2,323
Underground .....	249	264

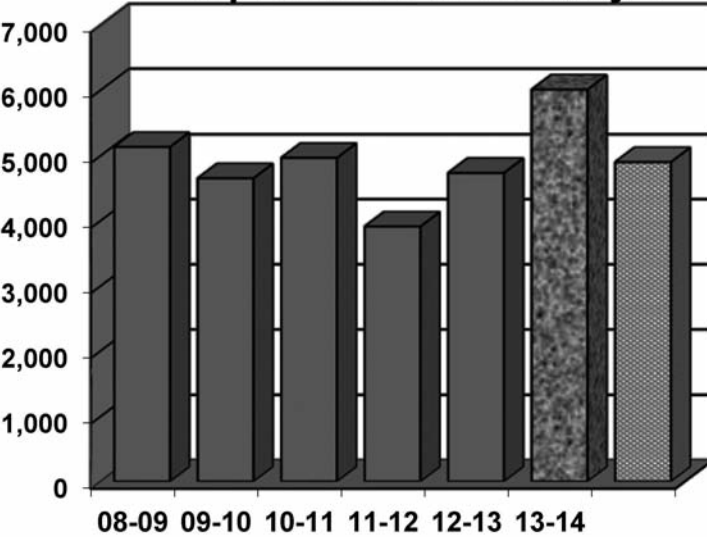
# DEGREE DAYS

To determine degree days, you must calculate the daily mean temperature for the time period you are measuring. Degree day computation is based on the assumption that a building does not require any heat if the outside temperature averages 65 degrees during a 24-hour period. To obtain a degree day figure, the high temperature and the low temperature for the day are added and the total divided by two. That figure is then subtracted from 65. For example, if the high temperature was 30 degrees and the low temperature 10 degrees, the figure would be 30+10=40; 40/2=20; 65-20=45. This would be a 45-degree day. The higher the degree day figure, the more heat required to warm your home.

## DEGREE DAYS January 1 - January 31



## Year To Date September 1 to January 31



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## VOLTS AND JOLTS FEATURE OF THE MONTH

# Winter is no time for rest for Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

By Heather Blodgett

Winter planning and activities are crucial to Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, a division of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Most think of the refuge as only being active in the summer months, but winter allows the staff the necessary time to plan for the evolving wildlife and habitat the refuge experiences.

"Being as prepared as possible for the short field season allows us to accomplish the maximum amount of work possible," says Refuge Manager Craig Mowry. Refuge Operations Specialist Sean Lofgren agrees, "Planning and having supplies ensure that we can hit the ground running when the snow melts."

As snow begins to fall and winter sets in, staff get to work analyzing data that was collected in the recent months to create reports for future planning. Conferences, meetings and webinars follow through the season so staff can learn new skills, secure much needed funds, and collaborate with a plethora of other entities, such as the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, the National Weather Service, and many local colleges, watershed districts and public works departments, among others. "The winter gives us a chance to reflect on what we did last season, what worked and what didn't, and use that information for the next season," explains Lofgren.

Restoration and grazing planning determines the seeds to order while information gathered from precipitation and snowpack helps in watershed planning for spring and pool management for waterfowl. "Refuge operations are quite complex, and with limited staff



The trees and lookout tower at the Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge in Middle River are coated in a majestic blanket of frost this time of year. The tower, which is the only one in Minnesota to display the 'Flying Blue Goose' logo on the cab, provides a panoramic view of the woodlands and marshes, however it is closed during winter.

and funding, it is critical that much forethought and planning occur prior to completing actual land management and wildlife survey activities during the spring and summer," explains Wildlife Biologist Gregg Knutsen. "A wealth of refuge accomplishments would not be possible without the assistance of multiple cooperators and outside funding, which requires a good deal of collaboration and planning."

Winter also gives workers a chance to catch up on safety and maintenance needs in the refuge, located near Middle River. Safety plans, inspections and

trainings are completed to ensure they are ready for the summer. Equipment, buildings and technology, are evaluated for projects and maintenance to keep things in good working order.

Maintenance is also done in the field, such as brush cutting and tree shearing. Management of willows is key to balancing the habitat's needs. According to Knutsen, the number and location of willows is evaluated and managed through mowing as willows are aggressive and can easily overcome meadows and grasslands. "Willow mowing can be a multi-pronged manage-

ment approach or it can simply be the chosen land management application to set back succession in a given area and provide quality browse for deer and moose," said Knutsen.

Aerial surveys are conducted during the winter months on big game, such as moose and deer, so population information can be reported to the State of Minnesota for management and

hunting. Surveys are conducted by a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pilot and trained staff, some at an elevation of just 50 meters above the ground, several times a year for several kinds of wildlife over the more than 96 square miles that the refuge occupies. The surveys also give staff a different perspective on the wildlife that isn't usually available otherwise. "One of my most memorable days on the refuge was during my first couple of weeks on the station when while collecting a low-level waterfowl survey, we flew over a sow black bear that had five cubs," said Knutsen. "A rare and amazing sight!"

Visitor Services Specialist for the refuge, Lynda Knutsen, keeps busy in the winter by preparing and ordering new publications and displays so she is ready for the visitors that attend in the spring and summer. She also creates programs and presentations, such as nature hikes, for the school groups that will visit later in the year.

Managing habitats and wildlife on Agassiz is full of challenges," explains Knutsen. "The size and complexity of the refuge habitats, as well as diversity of wildlife that use them, provide for countless work opportunities. From a personal standpoint, I don't think a refuge in the lower 48 exists where you can regularly observe such an incredible diversity of wildlife, from ducks to eagles, bear to moose, and fisher to bobcat."



Lynda Knutsen works in the Office & Visitor Center of the Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge preparing presentations and programs and updating displays for the busy summer season.



Maintenance workers must be diligent about willow mowing at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge as the aggressive plants can easily overcome grasslands and meadows.

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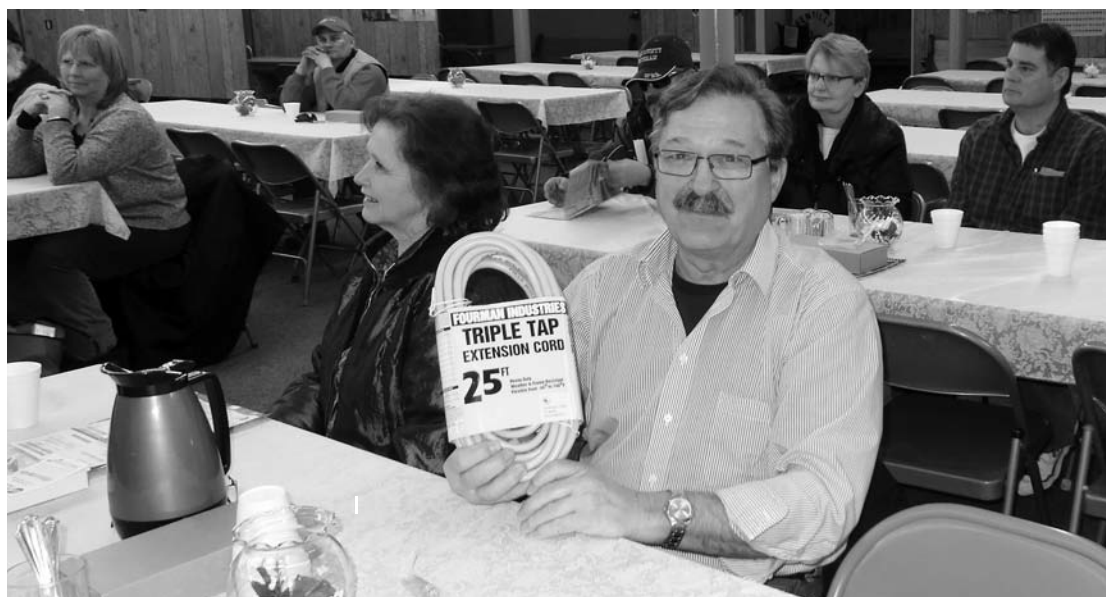




Luke Kaushagen, Thief River Falls, served as the chairman of the District 5 meeting held Feb. 10 at Community Church International, TRF.



The lunch of Red Lake Electric's District 1 meeting was prepared and served by Madline Dufault of Gentilly and Marie Chaput of Red Lake Falls. The pie and ice cream served at the meetings is always a hit.



Jerry Schindler, Red Lake Falls, won an extension cord at Red Lake Electric's District 1 meeting held Feb. 10 in Gentilly.



Pictured are some of the Red Lake Electric members who attended the District 5 meeting held Feb. 10 at Community Church International.



Lois Bergland, Thief River Falls, was the winner of an electric extension cord at Red Lake Electric's District 5 meeting which was held at Community Church International of TRF on Feb. 10.



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## Informational Web Sites

The following is a list of Web sites that can provide information and education in reference to electrical safety and energy conservation. These Web sites are listed as links on Red Lake Electric Cooperative's Web site at [www.redlakeelectric.com](http://www.redlakeelectric.com).

- Electrical Safety Foundation International: [www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org)
- Alliance to Save Energy: [www.ase.org](http://www.ase.org)
- US Environmental Protection Agency: [www.epa.gov/greenhomes](http://www.epa.gov/greenhomes)
- Energy Star: [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)
- Minnesota Safety Council: [www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org](http://www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org)
- Safe Electricity: [www.safeelectricity.org](http://www.safeelectricity.org)
- Lighting Controls Association: [www.aboutlightingcontrols.org](http://www.aboutlightingcontrols.org)
- US Consumer Product Safety Commission: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

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Pictured are members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative who attended the District 4 meeting held Jan. 27 in Oklee. Often weather plays a factor in attendance. These people braved the undesirable weather to attend the meeting.



Sharon Larson, Oklee, was winner of a George Foreman grill at Red Lake Electric's District 4 meeting held Jan. 27 in Oklee.

## Know how to stay safe during a power outage

Severe storms unfortunately do happen and are devastating to homes, properties, and lives. These storms can also take down power lines—creating a dangerous situation for all of us, including the linemen and linewomen working hard to get your power turned back on.

How long it takes to get your power restored depends on the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages, and when it becomes safe for utility personnel to get to the damaged areas. There are many steps in the (5128002.03 Marilyn Sletten) assessment and restoration process—clearing downed power lines; ensuring public health and safety facilities are operational; checking power stations and transformers; repairing transmission lines, substations, and distribution lines; and getting power restored to customers within the various damaged areas.

Be sure to contact your electric utility immediately to report the outage.

Safe Electricity and its members want you to know how to stay safe and get through until power can be restored to you. They recommend taking the following safety precautions:

Just because power lines are damaged does not mean they are dead. Every downed power line is potentially energized and dangerous until utility crews arrive on the scene to ensure power has been cut off. Downed power lines, stray wires, and debris in contact with them all have the

potential to deliver a fatal shock. Stay far away and keep others away from downed power lines.

Never enter a flooded basement if electrical outlets are submerged. The water could be energized.

Do not turn power off if you must stand in water to do so. Call your electric utility, and have them turn off power at the meter.

Before entering storm-damaged buildings, make sure electricity and gas are turned off.

Do not use water-damaged electronics before properly restoring them. Electric motors in appliances should be cleaned and reconditioned before use. It may be necessary to replace some of your appliances and electronics. Have your water-damaged items inspected and approved by a professional before using them.

If you clean-up outdoors after a storm, do not use electronic equipment when it is wet out.

If you are driving and come along a downed power line, stay away and keep others away. Contact emergency personnel or your utility company to address the downed power line.

If you do come in contact with a downed power line, do not leave the car. Wait for utility and emergency professionals to make sure the power line is de-energized before exiting the car.

During an outage, Safe Electricity recommends turning off electrical appliances and unplugging major electronics,

including computers and televisions. Power sometimes comes back in surges, which can damage electronics. Your circuits could overload when power returns if all your electronics are still plugged in and on. Leave one light on to indicate that power has been restored. Wait a few minutes and then turn on other appliances and equipment—one at a time.

If you use a standby generator, it is critical that proper safety precautions be taken. Always read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions. There should be nothing plugged into the generator when you turn it on. This prevents a surge from damaging your generator and appliances. Operate generators in well-ventilated, outdoor, dry areas. Never attach a temporary generator to a circuit breaker, fuse, or outlet. Permanent generators should be wired into a house by a qualified electrician using a transfer switch in order to (6012001.05 Randy J. Pahlen) prevent feeding electricity back into overhead lines, which can be deadly for linemen.

To help you get through, have a storm kit prepared. Keep the kit in a cool, dry place, and make sure all members of the family know where it is.

For information on when to save and when to throw out refrigerated food after a power outage, go to FoodSafety.gov.

For more information on electrical safety, explore [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



All three of these gentlemen were prize winners at Red Lake Electric's District 4 meeting. They included, left to right: Ordean Rystad, Oklee; Dale Cote, Trail; Clayton Larson, Plummer.

## AUTO PAY OFFERED BY RLEC

Red Lake Electric Cooperative is pleased to offer you Auto Pay. Now you can have your monthly energy bill paid automatically from your checking or savings account. You can receive the Auto Pay service by completing the Auto Pay sign-up sheet and returning it to Red Lake Electric Cooperative.

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falls on a weekend or holiday, the payment will be made on the next business day. You will continue to receive your monthly energy bill as you have in the past, indicating the amount that will be withdrawn from your bank account. The proof of your payment will appear on your bank statement and your next month's energy bill statement.

**Continue to pay your monthly bill until you are notified on your bill that the Auto Pay has been set up for you.**

If you have any questions about the Auto Pay please call RLEC at 800-245-6068 or 218-253-2168.

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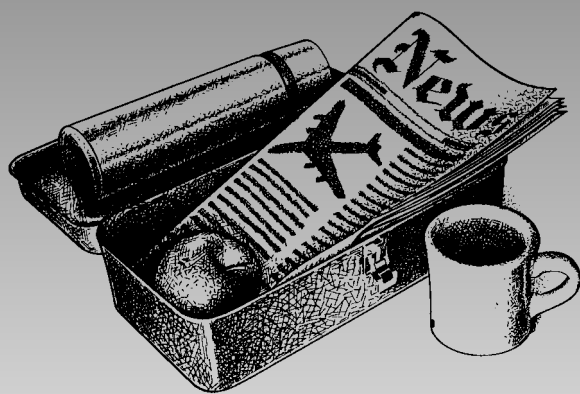
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# Warning: Don't bake all bulbs

Oven lights are handy. Curious if a casserole's ready? Flip the switch; no need to open the oven and release heat to get a (6722001.03 James Lessard) baking update. But be careful when replacing this little light. Never put a bulb in the oven that's not built for high heat.

Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) use less energy than classic incandescent bulbs, but they're not safe in extreme temperatures. Most lighting labels designate safe temperatures, but warnings may be in fine print. Need to replace your oven light? Look for appliance light bulbs. Found at Ace, Hardware Hank, Do it Best, Lowe's, and other retailers, these bulbs are designed for extreme temperatures in ovens and refrigerators. The hardy bulbs are here to stay; 40-watt appliance bulbs are exempt from federal lighting efficiency standards.

Why won't CFLs work? Instead of heating a filament until white-hot to produce light

like an incandescent bulb, a fluorescent lamp contains a gas that produces (UV) ultraviolet light when excited by electricity. The UV light and the white coating inside the bulb result in visible light.

Since CFLs don't use heat to create light, they are 75 percent more energy efficient. But the technology that cuts energy use doesn't stand a chance in an oven's 400+ degree heat.

CFLs are good for the pocketbook but not perfect in every situation. Keep these tips in mind:

**1. Don't dim unless it's dimmable.** Buy a specifically designed CFL for a dimmer switch application.

**2. Don't flip too fast.** CFLs work best if they are left on for more than 15 minutes each time they are turned on. Older bulbs take 30 seconds to three minutes to (7911001.03 Orville Brinkman) reach efficient operation. Frequently switching them on and off shortens bulb

life. Newer CFLs feature an 'Instant on' capability; look for that on the lighting label if you expect frequent flipping.

**3. Give them air.** CFLs may be used in enclosed fixtures as long as the enclosed fixture is not recessed. Totally enclosed recessed fixtures create temperatures too high for CFLs.

**4. Protect CFLs outside.** Look at the package or bulb for temperature restrictions before using a CFL outdoors.

**5. Don't shake.** Don't use CFLs in vibrating environments such as a ceiling fan or garage door opener.

**6. Do the twist.** Always screw and unscrew the lamp by its base. Never forcefully twist the CFL into a light socket by the glass tubes.

To learn more about using and recycling CFLs, visit [www.epa.gov/cfl](http://www.epa.gov/cfl).

Source: Empire Electric Association, U.S. Department of Energy



## Prevent Common Kitchen Hazards

**COOKING HAZARDS** are the #1 cause of home fires.

**OLDER ADULTS** account for more than **30%** of fire-related deaths annually.

### Kitchen Safety Practices

**STAY IN** the kitchen at all times when you're cooking.

**KEEP** flammable items away from the stovetop and other hot surfaces.

**UNPLUG** countertop appliances when not in use.

**NEVER USE** an oven for heating your home.

### Four Kitchen Safety Tips to Live By

**1 NEVER COOK** if you are sleepy, have been drinking alcohol or have taken medications that make you drowsy.

**2 USE A TIMER** to remind you to check on food that is simmering or in the oven.

**3 DOUBLE CHECK** that oven burners and appliances are off when you are done.

**4 USE GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER (GFCI)**-protected outlets for countertop appliances. Found mostly in areas where electrical products might come in contact with water, GFCIs protect against shock and electrocution.

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1997 Chev 1500 4x2, V8, Auto, Blue/Green .....\$3,995

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2009 Chev 1500 LT 4x4 Z71, 93k, Red .....\$21,900  
2009 Chev 1500 LT 4x4 Z71, 43k, Dark Blue .....\$22,900  
2009 GMC 1500 SLE 4x4 Z71, 116k, Red.....\$20,500  
2006 Dodge 1500 Mega Cab SLT 4x4, 127k, Blue .....\$17,900  
2005 Chev 1500 LT 4x4 Z71 96k, Silver .....\$16,900  
2005 Chev 1500 LS 4x4 Z71, 163k, Silver .....\$10,900  
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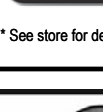
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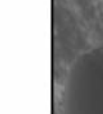
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