



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

VOL. 44 – NO. 06

RED LAKE FALLS (RED LAKE COUNTY), MINNESOTA 56750

APRIL 2009

Red Lake Electric Cooperative holds 71st annual meeting March 25

"Our Energy, Our Future" was the focus of Red Lake Electric Cooperative's 71st annual meeting. The meeting was held March 25 in the Imperial Room of the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls.

"Our Energy, Our Future" is a grassroots campaign, sponsored by electric cooperatives, asking America's electric consumers to build a dialogue with elected officials. Elected officials are being asked to find reasonable, affordable solutions that will keep electricity flowing into the future.

The meeting opened with the National Anthem sung by Ashley Carlson of Red Lake Falls. Carlson is a sophomore at Lafayette High School in Red Lake Falls and the daughter of Linda Carlson.

In his president's report, Kelly Lundeen said the past year was very good in many respects. RLEC was spared any major storm related outages and that the main cause for service interruptions was due to underground cable failure. Lundeen thanked customers who had given easements to replace faulty cable with overhead conductor. Outage time per customer averaged 1.7 hours in 2008; slightly better than last year and better than the average service interruption over the past five years.

Lundeen reported over \$475,000 was paid out in capital credit retirements and member equity was a strong 52 percent of assets. He also thanked the Cooperative's members who participated in the Operation Round Up® program.

Roger Johanneck, general manager, gave his report and discussed three different topics: retail rate increase, Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) and the nationwide "Our Energy, Our Future" campaign.

Johanneck mentioned the reason for the 13.3 percent retail rate increase that was effective with March bills was due to the loss of the DBS revenue stream that ended in February, 2008 and the 13 percent wholesale rate increase implemented by Minnkota Power Cooperative. Johanneck also mentioned that the CIP program was changing from a spending requirement to a savings requirement effective 2010. This would increase the cost to Red Lake Electric Cooperative from an annual cost of \$67,000 to over \$200,000.



The 71st annual meeting of the Red Lake Electric Cooperative was held March 25 in the Imperial Room of the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls. Meeting attendees listened to reports that reviewed the Cooperative's 2008 operations. Attendance was limited to 175 people due to weather and road conditions. *More pictures appear on pages 5 and 6.*

Johanneck then discussed the "Our Energy, Our Future" campaign that invited customers to start a dialogue with their elected officials regarding a proposed carbon tax or cap and trade legislation that would increase the cost of energy to all (1230003.05 Gary Leader) customers. Johanneck encouraged the membership to complete the postcards provided to customers in their monthly bill and at the meeting and RLEC would see to it that they would get to their elected officials in Minnesota and Washington.

Shirley Bregier, accountant, gave the financial report for 2008. She said that RLEC's total energy sales increased. Kilowatt hour sales were at an all time high, both off-peak and on-peak sales increased to a total of over 130 million. The cost of power RLEC bought from Minnkota Power Cooperative was \$5.8 million and is the largest expense RLEC has. The Cooperative purchased 141.7 million kWhs.

The energy charge makes up \$3 million or 50 percent of the cost of power. The peak demand charge is 30 percent of the total cost of power while the transmission and substation charge make up the other 20 percent.

RLEC's operating expenses were \$1.9 million, up slightly from 2007. This equals about 1/4 of the total expenses of bringing electric power to RLEC customers. Depreciation and interest expense is slightly over \$1 million. RLEC has \$25.1 million in electric plant which consists of 2,319 miles of overhead line and 235 miles of underground and the related equipment to deliver energy to its customers. RLEC built 77 new services in 2008.

Dave Loer, Minnkota Power CEO, talked about power supply issues, wind generation, load control and climate change. He said that Minnkota had just about completed a deal with Minnesota Power

that would transfer Minnesota Power's share of Young II generation to Minnkota Power in exchange for the DC transmission line that extends from the Young generating plant in Center, N.D. to Duluth. That deal is not yet complete, but would hopefully be by the end of 2009.

Loer mentioned that this was a good deal for both parties and was considered a win-win situation for the two G&Ts. It is unlikely given

the nature of uncertainty around coal fired power plants that getting a permit for a new Young III coal plant would have ever happened.

Loer also talked about the successful addition of more wind energy to Minnkota's resources and that by 2010, Minnkota will generate over 30 percent of their energy from wind. Loer stated, "We need coal, however, to cover our energy needs when the wind is not blowing and that wind cannot supply all of

our needs."

Three directors were elected at the annual meeting. Incumbents Robert Olson, Middle River, District 2; Lundeen, Trail, District 7; and Robert Finstad, Thief River Falls, District 8 were the nominees and were re-elected to serve three-year terms.

Kim Swanson, Thief River Falls, president of the Red Lake Electric Trust, Inc. presented a \$2,000 Operation Round Up grant to Oliver Urdahl, Viking. Urdahl accepted the check on behalf of the Viking Volunteer Fire Department and First Responders.

Since 1993, Operation Round Up grants totaling more than \$319,000 have been awarded to area nonprofit and charitable organizations throughout the service area of RLEC. There are 3,850 Cooperative members that contribute to Operation Round Up, which represents 90 percent participation.

Rodney Hoffman, Goodridge, was recognized for the six years he has served on the Red Lake Electric Trust Board. Hoffman was presented a plaque in appreciation by Johanneck.

Musical entertainment was provided by Vernon Rogalla of Goodridge. Door prizes were awarded with a special prize presented to long-term member Hazel Magnuson of Newfolden. Lunch was served by members of Black River Lutheran Church of Red Lake Falls.

RLEC presently serves 5,163 accounts for consumers in Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, Polk and Beltrami Counties. The current board of directors includes Lundeen; Bonnie Christians, vice-president, Crookston; Henry Wieland, secretary-treasurer, Red Lake Falls; Olson; Finstad; Steve Linder, Oklee; Joyce Johnson, Viking; Mark Hanson, Thief River Falls; and Peter Mosbeck, Red Lake Falls.

Directors elected at annual meeting

Three directors were elected at Red Lake Electric Cooperative's annual meeting. All three were incumbent directors and were elected to three-year terms. They include: Robert Olson, Middle River; Kelly Lun-

deen, Trail; and Robert Finstad, Thief River Falls. The annual (7905004.02 Steven Sogla) meeting was held March 25th at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls.



Robert Olson



Kelly Lundeen



Robert Finstad

Robert Olson, Middle River, was re-elected as the director of District 2. He has represented the district's members for 31 years.

Olson resides in East Valley Township of Marshall County with his wife Shirley. They have five children, 13 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Olson serves as a director at New Hope Lutheran Church in Newfolden. As past times, he attends flea markets, enjoys collecting antiques and attends fall threshing bees.

Olson stated, "Representing the members of District 2 for 31 years has been an honor. There have been a lot of changes with the Cooperative over the years. We are currently being faced with challenges that could/will affect electric rates."

Kelly Lundeen, Trail, was re-elected as the director from District 7. He has been the district representative for 15 years and serves as president of the Cooperative's board of directors. Lundeen also serves as Red Lake Electric's representative on the Minnkota Power Cooperative board of directors.

Lundeen and his wife, Connie, reside in Deer Park Township of Pennington County. They have five children, 12 grandchildren. Lundeen is involved with grain farming with his brother Gary. He is a member of Oak Park Lutheran Church rural Oklee. As hobbies, Lundeen enjoys hunting and fishing.

"I enjoy serving as a director of Red Lake Electric," stated Lundeen. "It has been a learning experience and I look forward to continuing to serve the members of the Cooperative."

Robert Finstad, Thief River Falls, was re-elected as the District 8 director. He has represented the members of the district for 10 years.

Finstad and his wife, Stephanie, along with their two children, Dylan and Jerzie, reside on the family farm in Rocksbury Township of Pennington County. They are members of United Methodist Church in Thief River Falls. Finstad is self employed in the construction business and also does some grain farming.

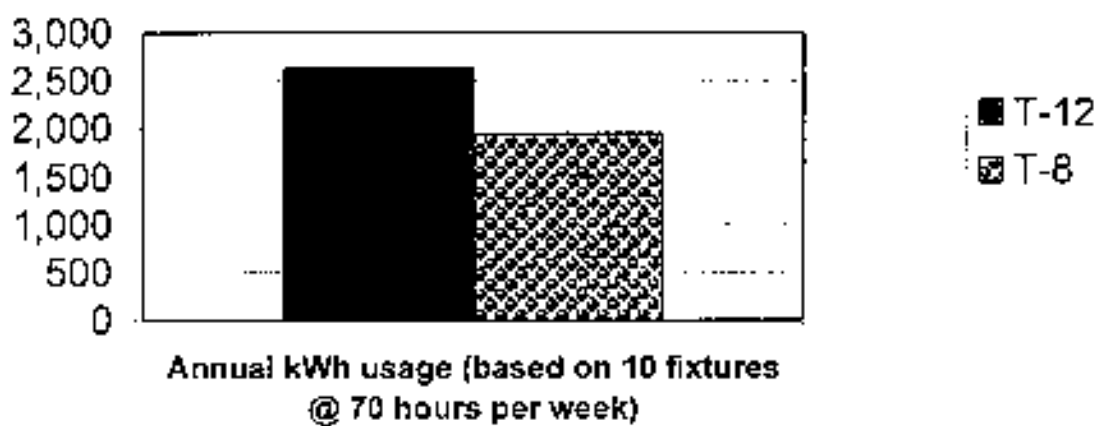
"I appreciate the confidence my fellow members have bestowed on me," said Finstad. "As a director of the Cooperative I have tried to act in the interest of all members and will continue to do so."

QUICK TAKES

A look at some statistics from your Red Lake Electric Cooperative

Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc. (RLEC) will pay cash rebates to commercial and industrial customers for the installation of qualifying lighting equipment to replace inefficient light fixtures in existing buildings. The maximum rebate per member is \$15,000 and cannot exceed 75% of the project cost, including materials & labor. The chart below shows the energy advantage of replacing older style (T-12) 4 foot fluorescent tube lighting with the new style (T-8) energy efficient 4 foot fluorescent tube lighting. Contact RLEC today and find out more about our 2009 commercial lighting retrofit rebate program.

4 foot Fluorescent Tube Lighting comparison.





Manager's Comments

by Roger Johanneck



Keeping energy affordable

I have opted for the "less is more" approach with my report to you this month in hopes that the time you may have normally taken to read my column will be used instead to fill out the "Our Energy, Our Future" postcard sent to you with this month's energy bill.

For those not familiar with the Our Energy, Our Future campaign, there is more information included in this month's Volts and Jolts about this grassroots effort taken on by our nations rural electric cooperatives. The message (postcards) we send to our lawmakers telling them to keep energy affordable as they consider climate

change proposals is an important one. If you think it is important too; you can help get that message to our elected officials by taking a (5033003.05 Cleta Ralph) couple minutes of your time to complete and return the postcard mailed to you with your bill and return it to us at Red Lake Electric Cooperative. Your message will be passed on to your elected officials.

For those of you that have already responded on the post cards included with last month's energy bill or contacted their elected representatives at the www.OurEnergyMN.coop website, thank you!

Together we have the power to make a difference

Minnesota electric cooperatives, along with cooperatives across the nation, are launching a grassroots campaign asking our elected officials to find reasonable, affordable solutions that will keep our electricity flowing into the future.

We are calling this campaign "Our Energy, Our Future: A Dialogue With America". It's about building a dialogue between America's electricity consumers and our elected officials. It's about our nation's pressing capacity crisis, the technological hurdles we face in developing new, less carbon-intensive power generation and the need to keep electricity affordable while achieving climate change goals. Legislators at both the national and state level need to be made aware of these issues and how they will affect all of us.

Now is the time to begin that conversation with your elected officials, to call on them to provide the leadership needed to face our energy challenge and find solutions. They need to incite bipartisan political action, set achievable goals and (3836003.01 Roger and Melannie Lundstrom) prepare for what all of this will mean to the monthly electric bills of all American consumers. You don't need to be an energy expert to ask questions.



to make emissions free electric plants an affordable reality?

- Affordability - Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much will this increase my electric bill and what will you do

to make it affordable?

- Jobs - How will you keep existing jobs and attract new businesses to Minnesota if our electric rates are higher than neighboring states?

Here's what you need to do to become a part of this grassroots effort: Complete the postcard that was included with your electric statement, return it with your next energy payment and we will sign up for you. Or, if you prefer, you can sign up yourself by going to the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) "Our Energy, Our Future" website at www.ourenergymn.coop and entering your personal information. Either way you choose, you only need to sign up once. After receiving your information, MREA will be forwarding the questions for you. The first three questions will go to our representatives in Washington and all four questions will go to our state officials.

Asking questions will help find the answers to solve the problem of balancing climate change goals with keeping your lights on and your electric bills affordable. It's the (6814001.03 Richard Delage) responsibility of all of us to make our voices heard before decisions are made that affect our energy and our future.

Four questions have been developed to get the dialogue with elected officials headed in the right direction:

- Capacity - Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency can provide. What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?
- Technology - Our country faces a crisis as electricity use increases faster than available supply. I believe that by unleashing American ingenuity we can solve this problem. What are you doing to fully fund the research required

Cooperatives ready to help craft a workable climate change plan

By Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Reprinted from "Electric Coop Today" April 10, 2009 issue.

Last fall, the political winds that brought in a new administration and bolstered the majority in Congress also brought in sweeping new energy proposals, including proposals to address climate change.

The issue of climate change remains intensely controversial-and political-but the hard reality is that nobody wins if this fight continues indefinitely.

Electric cooperatives and other utilities are facing a power crunch. We need to build new power generation, but the drawn-out fight over carbon dioxide emissions has hobbled utility planning.

It is difficult to finance new power plants (4507001.03 Lester A. DeBriyn) when no one knows the future cost of carbon-intensive fuel options.

Carbon dioxide is going to be regulated whether or not Congress acts. Two years ago, the Supreme Court instructed the Environmental Protection Agency to determine whether greenhouse gases should be considered pollutants under the Clean Air Act.

In March, the new EPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson, submitted the Office of Management and Budget a proposed "endangerment finding" covering carbon dioxide emissions from the transportation sector. In short, the regulatory process is already in motion.

Any attempt to regulate carbon under this law, which was intended to address discrete local and regional air pollution problems, will create a glorious disaster.

We need Congress to step in with a workable plan.

I have told leaders in both Congress and the Obama administration that electric cooperatives are ready to work with them to craft an economically sustainable approach that will set realistic reduction targets and, at the same time, protect consumers.

Make no mistake: Even under a best-case scenario, any regulation of carbon is going to increase the cost of electricity. The details of the law will determine how great that increase will be.

This being the case, the government has an obligation to deal hon-



Glenn English

estly with the public about the additional costs we are being asked to bear.

I strongly believe our elected officials must be straightforward and accept responsibility for the consequences of climate change legislation. Early signs are not encouraging, however.

All the proposals involve putting a price, or tax, on national carbon dioxide emissions in order to achieve reductions. But who will set that price? How? Who will pay?

One approach is a carbon tax, which some economists argue has the advantages of simplicity, economic certainty and accountability. The administration and House leaders are taking a different approach, putting forward carbon "cap-and-trade" tax proposals.

While some propose giving "carbon emission allowances" to utilities for free to trade among themselves, others propose selling all the allowances in an open auction to the highest bidder, and still others have proposed a hybrid approach.

As not-for-profit utilities whose first obligation is to our consumer-members, an approach under which all allowances would be sold through auction must be considered a nonstarter.

A full auction would allow Wall Street traders to set the price of allowances, which down the road would determine electricity rates.

Prices could vary greatly, and if this market were unregulated, we could see the "Enronization" of the

carbon market.

Where would the auction revenues go? Hedge funds? Shareholders? Consumers?

More likely they would be siphoned off for new government programs.

Some members of Congress are now talking of returning the revenue to consumers.

If our political leaders are serious about climate change, they will ensure this revenue is used to help develop technology that will allow the use of carbon-emitting fuels and reduce the impact on consumers.

By May, when hundreds of cooperative directors and staff will be in Washington for our legislative, conference, congressional offices will have received nearly 2 million communications from consumer-members.

Visits to those congressional offices will present an opportunity to ask our elected officials point-blank where they stand: "Are you with Main Street or Wall Street?"

GOPHER STATE



ONE CALL

Call before digging!
It's the law!

1-800-252-1166

Mission Statement

It is the mission of Red Lake Electric Cooperative to enhance the quality of life for people of our service area by consistently providing quality electric service and other valued services while holding our employees, our community and our environment in high regard.



Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.

One of the Minnkota Power Systems

After-Hours
Outage Phone
218-253-2200

WE PROUDLY PRESENT TO YOU

The Red Lake Electric Cooperative Customer Service Guarantee



It's short and simple! Red Lake Electric Cooperative employees will meet or exceed your expectations of friendly, courteous service and will meet any commitments they make to you. If your expectations of the service provided by our employees is not met, please contact me at the Red Lake Electric Cooperative office, 253-2168. You will receive \$5.00 for your inconvenience and our promise to serve you better in the future. Our employees' commitment to quality customer service makes this guarantee possible.



Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.

One of the Minnkota Power Systems

ROGER JOHANNECK
General Manager



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 \$50 collection fee will be charged to your account, even if you pay the collector.

To have a disconnected service reconnected, all amounts owing, a \$50 reconnection fee, and a security deposit must be paid. If the service must be reconnected after normal working hours, a \$100 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 \$17 to \$23 month
First 500 KWH9.0¢ Kwh
Over 500 KWH (April-Dec.)6.6¢ Kwh
Over 500 KWH (Jan.-Mar.)7.5¢ Kwh
Multiphase users add \$17/month cost of service charge.

Standby, \$9/month (meter disconnected but the power line retained; standby is not available on services larger than 15 KVA transformer capacity).

Security light, \$7/month, high pressure sodium, \$8/month, mercury vapor; water heater flat credit, \$5/month (on January-April billing); off-peak equipment charge, \$4/month per heat meter; off-peak electric heat rate, 4.0¢/kWh long-term control, 5.8¢/kWh short-term control.

RED LAKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, Inc.

VOLTS & JOLTS

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NOTICE

Hidden within the text of the articles on pages 1, 2, 3 and the back page of this issue of the Volts & Jolts are the names and account numbers of five RLEC members. They will appear within the articles in parenthesis as such (99-99-99-999-99 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

Fruit Cocktail Cake

3 eggs
2-1/2 c. sugar
2-1/2 c. self-rising flour
8 oz. can fruit cocktail
1 tsp. vanilla
In a large bowl, beat eggs, then add all other ingredients; mix and pour into three greased and floured 9-inch cake pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until cake leaves sides of pan. Remove from pans and cool.
Icing:
2 sticks margarine
1-1/2 c. sugar
2/3 c. milk
1 c. chopped pecans
1 c. coconut
1 tsp. vanilla
Combine all ingredients in a small saucepan and cook over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes. Spread over cake layers while still hot. Serves 10 to 12.

Pineapple Upside-Down Cake

1/4 c. margarine
1 c. packed brown sugar
20 oz. can sliced pineapple, drained, reserve liquid
6 oz. jar maraschino cherries, drained
1 pkg. yellow cake mix
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Melt margarine in a 13-inch by 9-inch by 2-inch pan. Sprinkle brown sugar over margarine. Arrange pineapple slices and cherries over brown sugar, press gently. Prepare cake mix according to package directions, except use pineapple juice in place of some of the liquid required. Pour over pineapple and cherries. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove from oven and turn upside-down on a serving platter. Leave pan over cake for 1-2 minutes before removing. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

Fresh Apple Pound Cake

1-1/4 c. vegetable oil
2 c. sugar
3 eggs
3 c. sifted flour
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. vanilla
3 large apples, chopped
1 c. chopped pecans
In a large mixing bowl, combine oil, sugar and eggs; beat at medium speed for 3 minutes. In a medium bowl, combine flour, salt and soda. Add to oil and sugar mixture. Add vanilla. Fold in apples and pecans. Pour into greased and floured tube cake pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 1 hour and 20 minutes. Cool. Glaze with brown sugar glaze.
Glaze:
3 tbsp. butter
3 tbsp. light brown sugar
3 tbsp. cream or condensed milk
3 tbsp. sugar
1/4 tsp. vanilla
Combine all ingredients in a medium saucepan until mixture thickens. Pour over warm cake on serving dish. Serves 10 to 12.

Apricot Layer Cake

1 pkg. (18-1/2 oz.) white cake mix
1-1/4 c. water
3 egg whites
1/3 c. vegetable oil
1 tbsp. grated orange peel
1 tsp. orange or lemon extract
2/3 c. apricot preserves
Brown Butter Frosting:
1/2 c. butter (no substitutes)
3-1/2 to 4 c. confectioners' sugar
1/3 c. orange juice
1/4 c. chopped pecans
In a mixing bowl, combine the first six ingredients; beat on low speed for 30 seconds or until moistened. Beat on high for 2 minutes. Pour into two greased and floured 8-inch round cake pans. Bake at 3500 for 30-35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes; remove from pans to a wire rack to cool completely. Split each layer in half horizontally. Spread the cut side of each bottom layer with 1/3 c. apricot preserves; replace tops and set aside. For frosting, in a heavy saucepan, cook and stir butter over medium heat for 7-8 minutes or until golden brown. Pour into a mixing bowl; add 3 c. confectioners' sugar and orange juice. Beat until smooth. Add enough of the remaining sugar to reach spreading consistency. Spread frosting between filled cakes; frost top and sides of cake. Sprinkle with nuts. Store in the refrigerator. Yield: 12 servings.

Hummingbird Cake

3 c. all-purpose flour
2 c. sugar
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
3 eggs, beaten
1 c. vegetable oil
1-1/2 tsp. vanilla
8 oz. can crushed pineapple, undrained
2 c. chopped bananas
1 c. chopped pecans
Cream Cheese Frosting:
8 oz. pkg. cream cheese
1 stick margarine
16 oz. pkg. powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 c. chopped pecans
Combine first five ingredients in a large mixing bowl; add eggs and oil, stirring until dry ingredients are moistened. Do not beat. Stir in vanilla, pineapple, bananas and 1 cup pecans. Spoon into three greased and floured 9-inch cake pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes in pans. Remove from pans and cool completely. To make frosting, combine cream cheese and margarine; beat with electric mixer until smooth. Add powdered sugar and vanilla; beat until light and fluffy. Spread frosting between layers and on top and sides. Sprinkle with 1/2 cup chopped pecans. Serves 10 to 12.

Earth Day bluebird program is April 19 at Rydell Refuge

Celebrate Earth Day, officially April 22, by learning more about bluebirds and how to attract them at a bluebird program Sunday, April 19 at the Rydell National Wildlife Refuge. Activities will run from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and include a short program about bluebirds at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. or whenever someone asks and building of bluebird houses anytime during the program hours.
A fascinating video that takes viewers inside a bluebird box to watch the young mature from bald babies through fledging from the nest will be shown. Additional information will be shared regarding the life cycle of bluebirds, habitat preferences, placement and monitoring of nest boxes, pests and much more. An informative hand-out will be available to all who wish to learn more about bluebirds.
One of the best ways to increase the chances of seeing bluebirds is to put out nesting boxes for them. The increasing numbers of bluebirds today is largely due to their ready acceptance and use of man-

made nest boxes. For those wishing to make a bluebird houses, pre-cut materials and supplies will be on hand for making the popular Peterson style house—just bring a hammer if you have one. Volunteers will be available to help make the houses. This is a fun activity for children, parents and grandparents to work on together.
There is no charge for the program or to make up to two bluebird houses to take home.
The Friends of Rydell Refuge Association, which supports much of the visitor services provided at the Refuge, will accept donations of any amount to help defray cost of supplies for the bluebird houses, refreshments and other costs of doing programs at the Refuge. Everyone is welcome to come.
To get to the Rydell Refuge go three miles east of Mentor or three miles west of Erskine on U.S. Highway 2 and turn south on Polk County 210. Follow 210 about 2.5 miles to the entrance.
For more information, call the Refuge at 1-800-841-0172.

MnFRAC seeking students for 4-H State Fair mentor program

Minnesota Foundation for Responsible Animal Care (MnFRAC) is inviting college students with an interest in serving as spokespersons for animal agriculture to apply for the position of Minnesota State Fair 4-H Animal Science Peer Mentor. Eight positions are available.
Persons in these positions will serve as mentors to selected 4-H State Fair livestock exhibitors in all species (beef, dairy, swine, goats, lama, poultry and rabbits) to encourage, model and role-play positive interactions with State Fair visitors to livestock displays.
MnFRAC is seeking college students age 18 or over, with an interest and/or experience in 4-H and livestock exhibits. Other qualifications are communication, teaching and coaching skills, ability to work with variety of adults and youth, expertise in production, processing and promotion of one or more animal species and experience as a livestock exhibitor and industry spokesperson.
The program will include a one-day orientation/training led by MnFRAC, 4-H and Midwest Dairy staff, written materials for review and coaching and daily support by MnFRAC staff during the State Fair.
Applicants must be available the five days of the 4-H livestock weekend, August 26 through 30. A \$300 stipend per person, fair entry tickets and 4-H meal tickets will be provided.
To apply applicants must submit a resume, transcript and statement describing why they are interested in this position and the industry knowledge, communication and leadership skills that they bring to the position. Application deadline is July 1; applications will be accepted until all positions are filled.
Send completed materials to: Juanita Reed-Boniface, Project Manager, JRB Associates, Inc., 2462 Lake George Dr. N.W. Cedar, MN 55011. For more information contact AgriFolks@gmail.com.

Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc. Operating Report MONTHLY COMPARISON

	FEBRUARY 2008	FEBRUARY 2009
Total Revenue	\$ 1,079,777	\$ 1,081,849
Total Margins	\$ 725,619	\$ 208,770
Cost of Power	\$ 620,513	\$ 623,458
KWH's Purchased	18,411,792	17,253,468
Capital Credits Paid to Estates	\$ 4,938	\$ 5,563

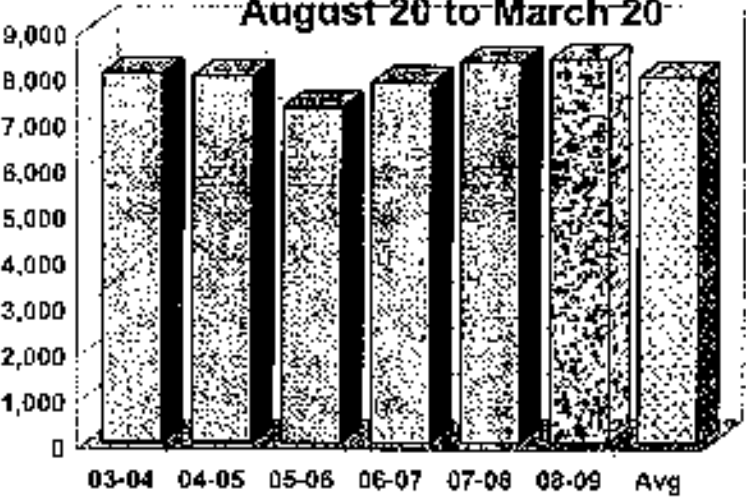
YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON

	FEBRUARY 2008	FEBRUARY 2009
Total Revenue	\$ 2,016,575	\$ 2,238,620
Total Margins	\$ 819,241	\$ 431,291
Cost of Power	\$ 1,193,314	\$ 1,298,815
KWH's Purchased	34,760,826	36,685,852
New Service Connections	0	0
Customers Served	5,096	5,158
Capital Credits Paid to Estates	\$ 6,246	\$ 11,502
Miles of Line		
Overhead	2,324	2,319
Underground	231	235

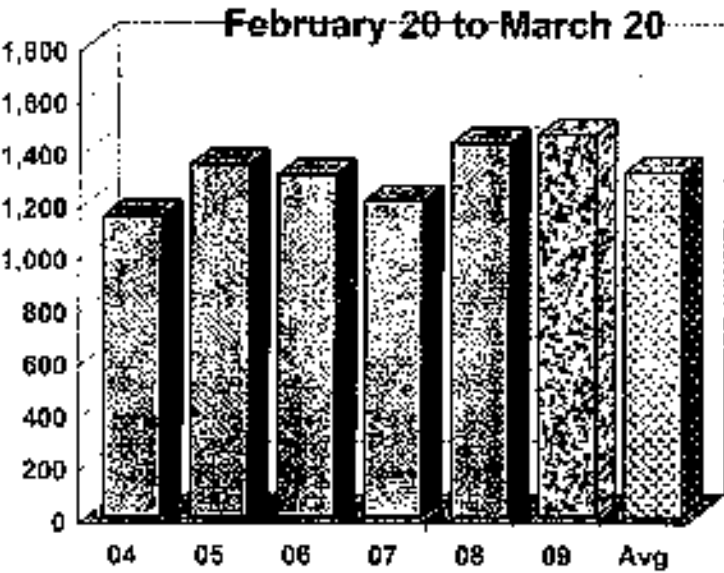
DEGREE DAYS

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.

YEAR TO DATE DEGREE DAYS August 20 to March 20



DEGREE DAYS February 20 to March 20



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VOLTS AND JOLTS FEATURE OF THE MONTH

Tom and Carol Schmitz chosen as Ag Couple

By Destiny Harmoning

Tom and Carol Schmitz have been chosen as this year's Red Lake Falls Ag Couple. The Schmitzes were chosen by the Red Lake Falls Merchant's Committee to represent the agricultural community during Ag Day, March 28.

Carol grew up near Dorothy, attending school in Red Lake Falls. She is the daughter of Eugene and Jeanette Wavra. Tom grew up on the farm where they now live, the son of Ted and Leona Schmitz.

Carol and Tom both graduated from Lafayette High School, Carol in 1979 and Tom in 1975. Carol and Tom met in high school, when Tom was friends with Carol's brother. They were married Oct. 11, 1980.

After high school, Tom attended Northland Community and Technical College in Thief River Falls for Farm Operation and Management. Carol attended the University of Minnesota, Crookston for accounting and also had a course on tax preparation in Thief River Falls.

Tom is a full-time machinist at Steiger Manufacturing of Red Lake Falls, building torque scrapers, PTO ditchers and other farm-related equipment. He has been working there for 10 years. Carol has been working full-time for Penn Porc for the past five years. She also owns Tailored Wear, Inc. which is operated from their farm.

Carol started Tailored Wear, which specializes in breathable, waterproof ambulance and fire department outerwear in November 1992. She has a representative who does all of the advertising and marketing for the company and Carol does all of the manufacturing of the products with the help of her five employees.

Tailored Wear, with support from a company in Maryland, also manufactures cage covers for scientific research centers that are used to cover rat and mouse cages or any other research being conducted.

Another business partnership that Carol is involved in through Tailored Wear is with LaserSharp in Red Lake Falls who help her with custom reflective jackets.

Tailored Wear is a nationwide company, selling products from one coast to the other, from Canada to Texas.

Carol also prepares taxes, which she has been doing for 28 years. She worked for H&R Block for 13 years until she started Tailored Wear but then continued to do tax preparation on her own.

Tom and Carol have four children: Clayton, 26, lives in Moorhead and works for the NRCS office in Ada; Lacey, 25, is married to Charles Lybecker and they live in Seattle where she works for a marketing company and he is a webmaster for corporate radio stations; Charlie, 23, works for DSG out of Sioux Falls, S.D.; and Austin is a senior at Lafayette High

Red Lake Falls Ag Couple Carol and Tom Schmitz

Red Lake Falls Ag Couple Carol and Tom Schmitz talked with Barb Seeger, left, owner of Of the Land Gallery during Ag Day March 28 at the Community Hall. Seeger is a member of the Merchants' Committee that chose Tom and Carol as the Ag Couple.

School.

In his free time, Tom enjoys watching hockey and deer hunting. Carol likes to be outside, gardening, cross-country skiing and reading. Tom also enjoys down hill skiing when he gets the chance.

Tom and Carol are officers for Browns Creek Township; Carol is the clerk and Tom is the supervisor. They are also members of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Red Lake Falls, where Carol teaches Sunday School.

On their 400-acre farm, the Schmitzes raise about 30 head of cross-bred beef cattle and grow small grains such as alfalfa and wheat. Some of their land is also in CRP. "Most of the land is used to keep the cow herd happy," Tom stated.

Tom and Carol purchased the farm in 1978 from Tom's mother. Tom has been farming most of his life and decided to take over the farm to keep it in the family. Tom is only the second generation to operate the farm that his father home-steaded in the mid-1940s.

Making up the 400-acre farm is the two quarters on Tom's family farm and also 80 acres from the farm Carol grew up on near Dorothy. "It's a good way to raise your kids," Carol said of living on a farm.

In the past they have raised hogs on the farm, something the Schmitzes thought they would continue to do until the market took out all of the small farmers. So they stopped raising the hogs and put some of their land in CRP.

The biggest challenge in farming for the Schmitzes is input costs and markets, however there are many rewards for them. "Every year being able to pay your bills," Carol stated. They also have enjoyed being able to keep the farm in the family. Tom also enjoys new life in the spring when the calves are born.

The price of fuel and fertilizer took their toll last year for the Schmitz farm, as well as many other farms across the nation, but they have been able to push through.

"I think we are very fortunate to be where we are at in the country as far as economy," Carol stated. Tom said where he works is very busy right now and is not seeing any adverse effects from the economic downturn. Carol said Tailor Wear has taken a dip in production due to working mostly with cities and counties and having to cater to their budgets.

In the future they hope the farm will continue to stay in the family. They want to continue to make improvements on the farm buildings and Carol is working on some new products with Tailored Wear that she hopes will break into an untapped market for farm outerwear in the near future.

When asked how they felt about being chosen as Ag Couple, Carol replied, "Shocked." "We're honored," Tom stated.

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Kathy and Ray Ulrich, Thief River Falls, were two Red Lake Electric Cooperative annual meeting attendees who visited with cooperative employees. The Ulrich's visit with Steve Conely, center, engineering technician.



Dale and Sylvia Cole, of Middle River, visit with Red Lake Electric board member Robert Olson, center, also of Middle River, at the Cooperative's annual meeting.



Annual meeting day is always an opportunity for a few laughs. Enjoying stories at Red Lake Electric's annual meeting are, from left, Veral Mosbeck, Red Lake Falls, and Dale Koop and John Bornholdt, Thief River Falls.



Registering at Red Lake Electric's annual meeting were Ordella and Ronald Haugen of Goodridge. Weather and road conditions were less than ideal on annual meeting day but still approximately 175 people braved the elements to attend.



The noon lunch, following Red Lake Electric Cooperative's annual meeting, was prepared and served by members of Black River Lutheran Church, rural Red Lake Falls. Some of the church members were, from left, June Mosbeck, Sharon Naplin, Lori Brooks, Ruth Mosbeck, Deb Cota and Joni Swanson.



Red Lake Electric Cooperative annual meeting attendees were encouraged to participate in a grassroots effort "Our Energy, Our Future" asking legislatures to explore reasonable, affordable solutions that will keep members' electricity flowing in the future. Speakers and presenters at the Cooperative's annual meeting, which was conducted March 25, at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls were, from left, Henry Wieland, secretary-treasurer, Kelly Lundeen, president, and Roger Johanneck, general manager.



Approximately 175 members and friends of Red Lake Electric Cooperative attended the Cooperative's annual meeting. The meeting was held March 25 in the Imperial Room of the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls. Attendees included, front from left, Alma Stenberg, Don Stenberg and Dale Brekke, all of Oklee. The number of meeting attendees was reduced due to weather and road conditions.



Annual meeting day is always time for fun, fellowship, maybe a prize, and a delicious noon lunch. Friends attending Red Lake Electric Cooperative's annual meeting included, front from left, Lorraine and Bernard Schmitz, Red Lake Falls, and Verla and Donovan Erlandson, Thief River Falls. The meeting was held March 25 at the Ralph Engelstad Arena.



Annual meeting attendees visiting following Red Lake Electric's annual meeting were, from left, Bernard Schmitz, Red Lake Falls, and Gladys and Murray Hogenson, Thief River Falls.



Kim Swanson, Thief River Falls, president of the Red Lake Electric Trust Board presented a \$2,000 Operation Round Up grant to Oliver Urdahl, Viking. Urdahl accepted the check, on behalf of the Viking Volunteer Fire Department and First Responders, at Red Lake Electric Cooperative's annual meeting held March 25 in Thief River Falls.



Rodney Hoffman, left, Goodridge, was recognized at Red Lake Electric's annual meeting for having served six years on the Red Lake Electric Trust Board. He was presented a plaque by Roger Johanneck, Cooperative manager and ex-officio trust board member. Since 1993, Operation Round Up grants totalling more than \$319,000 have been awarded to area non-profit and charitable organizations.



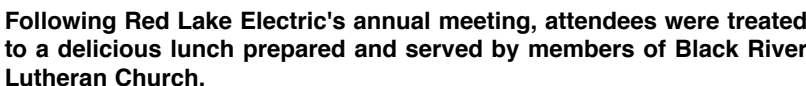
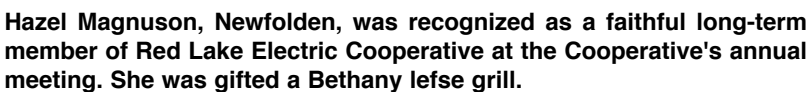
Two of approximately 175 attendees of Red Lake Electric's annual meeting were Shirley and Vincent Dessellier of Oklee.



One of many prizes given away at Red Lake Electric's annual meeting was a Meco electric grill. The grill was won by Korydon Chervestad of Oklee.



MaryAnn Schindler, Thief River Falls, was winner of a Betty Crocker toaster at Red Lake Electric's annual meeting.



Vern Rogalla, Goodridge, provided musical entertainment prior to and following Red Lake Electric's annual meeting.

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Heaters for sale on bids

Red Lake Electric Cooperative has five steam/hot water unit heaters for sale on bids. The heaters will be sold on an as-is basis, each as a single lot.

The heaters can be viewed at the Cooperative's headquarters, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sealed bids are due in the Cooperative office May 6, 2009 by 10 a.m.

The Cooperative reserves the right to reject any or all bids.



Lot 1: Modine steam or hot water unit heater, 10 years old. 1/6 HP 115V fan motor.



Lot 3: Fedder steam or hot water unit heater. 1/20 HP 115V fan motor.



Lot 2: Trane model S steam or hot water unit heater. 115V fan motor.



Lots 4 and 5: Vulcan steam or hot water unit heater, new in 2004. Steam output is 60,000 BTU; hot water output is 43,000 BTU. 1/20 HP 115V fan motor.

Don't let the air out!

Get back to efficiency basics with weatherization

By Megan McKoy

Children running in and out of the house on a hot summer's day may hear a common warning: "Don't leave the door open-you'll let the air out!" But how many adults do the same thing without realizing it?

While you may not leave your front door open, air leaks in the attic and basement let valuable air in and out of your home.

Laura Matney, a Building Performance Institute (BPI) certified building analyst, advises electric co-op consumers to look into weatherization before investing in other energy efficiency measures. "I certainly encourage the selection of energy-efficient appliances, but they don't provide the amount of savings that proper sealing of air leaks can. We're trained to look at the basics of building science-seal, insulate and then look at the equipment. If a homeowner only has money for one area then nine times out of 10 I recommend sealing."

For example, the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Star program advises addressing air leaks and ductwork in your home before investing in a new heating and cooling system; sometimes, those are the real sources of problems rather than your equipment.

If air leaks are generally hidden, where do you start?

Most leaks occur in the basement and attic. Starting in your basement, look for gaps and cracks where your cement or block foundation meets the frame of your home. Joists (building supports which are smaller than beams) between the floor and the foundation (called rim or band joists) create cavities, small empty spaces that are hard to insulate and may leak. Not all of the gaps are visible, so Energy Star suggests sealing the top and bottom of cavities around



rim joists. Use caulk to seal cracks that are 1/4 inch or smaller; spray foam works best to fill gaps from 1/4 inch to about 3 inches.

It's also a good idea to seal gaps between the basement ceiling and the floor above, like holes for wiring and water pipes.

In the attic, there are many small areas where air may come in, but focus on large spaces. For example, if your home has dropped soffits, part of the ceiling that has been lowered for lighting design, be sure they've been properly sealed. These design elements, common in bathrooms and kitchens, are often built before your home's drywall is installed, leaving part of your wall open to air from wall or floor cavities.

Even though there may be insulation covering dropped soffits in your attic, be sure all cavities around the soffits have been properly plugged. To do this, place fiberglass insulation inside plastic garbage bags and stuff it tightly into any cavities.

Pay attention to dirty insulation; it's a big clue that air is moving through the area. And just like the basement, be sure to seal gaps between the attic ceiling and the rooms below, including holes for wiring, lighting and the attic door.

Weatherizing your home will

save you money down the road-an average of \$358 each year, according to the U.S. Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program-but some people may not be able to pay for improvements. As a result of the federal stimulus package, families with household incomes below 200 percent of the national poverty level are eligible for up to \$6,500 in energy efficiency improvements. For a family of four, that's an income limit of \$44,100.

For co-op consumers not eligible for the program, the stimulus bill provides a homeowner efficiency tax credit of up to \$1,500, or 30 percent, of the cost for upgrades, including insulation that meets the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code.

There are many more ways to protect your home, including weather stripping doors and windows and sealing ducts. For step-by-step instructions on how to weatherize your home and start saving energy dollars today, download Sealing Air Leaks and Adding Attic Insulation, a do-it-yourself guide to weatherization from Energy Star. The guide is available at www.energystar.gov.

Sources: Energy Star, Building Performance Institute.

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

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