



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

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RED LAKE FALLS (RED LAKE COUNTY), MINNESOTA 56750

FEBRUARY 2009

Operation Round Up® grant applications due March 4

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 4.

Operation Round Up® is a program adopted by RLEC headquartered in Red Lake Falls. Customers choosing to "round up" their monthly electric bill payment provide funds for this effort. More than 85 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 their specific projects or programs. Since the program began in



1993, \$311,643 has been granted to community organizations and charities. Money is donated for 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 Rodney Hoffman, Goodridge; Kim Swanson, Thief River Falls; Bonnie Cote, Trail; and Henry Wieland and Roger Johanneck, Red Lake Falls.

To apply for Operation Round Up® grants, organizations should contact the RLEC office in Red Lake Falls 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 (5114005.01 Ebenezer Church) form is also available on the Cooperative's Web site at www.redlakeelectric.com.

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

The ins and outs of compact fluorescent lightbulbs

By Scott Gates

When Thomas Edison sparked light from a bit of carbonized sewing thread in 1879, could he have imagined that 130 years later the same basic technology would still be keeping the world out of the dark?

By any measure, Edison's incandescent lightbulbs have had a good run. But as of 2012 this time-tested technology will be phased out in the U.S., in favor of a more efficient generation of lightbulbs.

As a result, store shelves increasingly will be lined with more energy-efficient alternatives, the bulk of which will be compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs). You have probably seen these corkscrew-shaped bulbs by now and may have even outfitted your home with them. But what makes them so much more efficient?

CFLs are made of two components: a gas-filled tube (the "swirly" part) and an electronic ballast (the plastic base). Light gets produced when mercury molecules, contained in argon or neon gas in the bulb, are excited by an electric current. These molecules then react with a phosphor coating on the inside of the tube, which creates light. With a white coating, you get



white light; with a red coating, red light and so on.

Incandescent bulbs, on the other hand, (3830016.01 Wayne Hjelle) produce light by running a current through a tightly coiled metal filament, typically tungsten. Atoms in the filament produce light when heated to around 4,000 degrees Fahrenheit. As a result, about 90 percent of the power consumed by a typical incandescent lightbulb is emitted as heat, as anyone who has changed a hot bulb knows well. CFLs, in comparison, produce 75 percent less heat.

Benefits of CFLs go beyond cooler bulbs: A 75-watt incandescent lightbulb will burn out after about 40 days of continuous use, whereas a CFL can keep going for a full year; CFLs require one-third less energy than incandescent bulbs, which saves roughly \$30 in

energy costs over the bulb's lifetime, according to Energy Star.

As CFL technology advances, new bulb and light quality options will expand its use to a wider range of applications. Installation guidelines should be followed to ensure CFLs perform correctly.

For example, not all CFLs perform well on dimmable switches and three-way fixtures, so be sure to check the packaging to see if the bulb's ballast design matches your needs. You'll also get more value if you leave CFLs on for 15 minutes or longer; switching them on and off can shorten their lifespan.

Exterior lighting offers a great place to use CFLs, but livinh in a cold climate area, look for specially designed cold-weather versions; standard CFLs may not work well below 40 degrees.

To learn about the latest ways you can use CFLs to make your home more energy efficient, visit www.energystar.gov.

Sources: Energy Star, General Electric Company and U.S. Department of Energy.

Scott Gates writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

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 25, 2009, at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls.

The meeting agenda includes year 2008 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/ Henry Wieland, Secretary

Member meetings held recently

Four member meetings, three district and one informational, were recently held throughout Red Lake Electric Cooperative's service area.

The District 2 meeting was held Jan. 27 at Nazareth Lutheran Church in Holt. Cooperative members in attendance unanimously elected Robert Olson, the incumbent director, as the director candidate from the district.

An informational meeting was held Jan. 29 at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Gentilly. As with all the meetings, members and guests in attendance had an opportunity to win door prizes and were treated to refreshments, pie and ice cream.

The District 7 meeting was Feb. 2 at Oak Park Lutheran Church of rural Oklee. Thirty-seven members were in attendance and unanimously elected incumbent

director Kelly Lundeen as the director candidate of the district.

On Feb. 5, the District 8 meeting was held at St. John's Lutheran School of rural Thief River Falls. Robert Finstad, the current district director, was unanimously elected as the director candidate to be put in nomination.

Topics discussed at each meeting included (4409078.01 Jan A. Nordin) load management updates, portable electric heaters, auto bill pay, identity theft precautions, wind energy updates and retail and wholesale electric rates.

Thank you to everyone who took time to attend one of the meetings and for the many, good questions that were asked of Cooperative personnel.



Fifty-eight customers of Red Lake Electric Cooperative attended the Cooperative's District 2 meeting. The meeting was held Jan. 27 at Nazareth Lutheran Church in Holt. Additional member meeting pictures appear on pages 5 and 6.

Tamper resistant outlets protect children

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), approximately 2,400 children receive emergency room treatment every year for injuries caused by inserting objects such as paper clips, pens, safety pins, screws and nails, tools, wire, forks, tweezers, hair pins, keys, knives, coins and more, into electrical receptacles. This equates to approximately seven children each day.

Injuries range from electric shock to burns; pediatric burns can be particularly serious. Roughly 89 percent of injuries occur in children less than six years old.

One way to prevent these tragedies involves installing tamper-resistant outlets that prevent foreign objects from touching electri-



Source: ESFI

cally live components. A shutter mechanism prevents children from

sticking things into receptacles, while a spring-loaded system lets electricity flow only when equal pressure is applied simultaneously to both shutters (such from an electrical plug).

Although not widely used in homes, tamper-resistant outlets have been required in hospital pediatric care areas for more than 20 years. The 2008 National Electrical Code requires tamper-resistant outlets in new homes.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) recommends retrofitting older homes with these safety devices. Installation of tamper-resistant outlets can be done for as little as \$2 each.

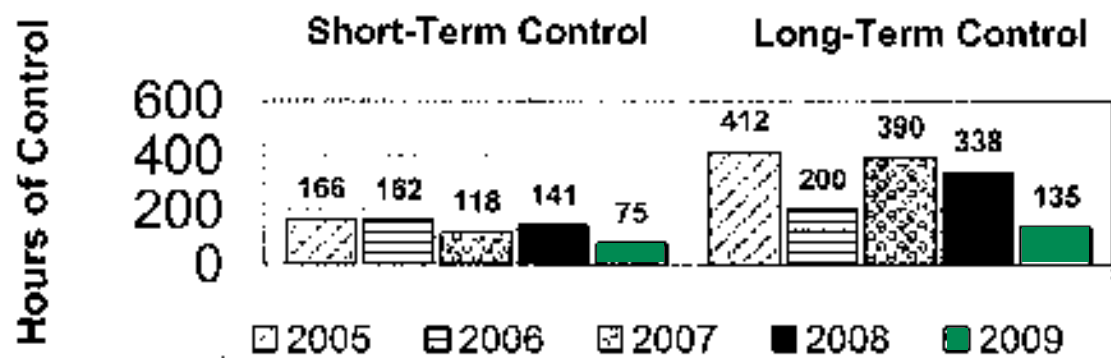
Sources: ESFI; National Electrical Manufacturers Association.

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. Despite this winter's cold weather and an increase in systemwide demand for energy, control times have been less this year because of additional generation resources at Minnkota Power Cooperative. More wind generation was added to the Langdon Wind Farm in 2008, the wind farm at Ashtabula, ND became operational this year, and less maintenance down time at the Milton R. Young coal-fired plant this winter have all contributed to less load control for RLEC's off-peak customers. The Langdon and Ashtabula Wind Farms are the largest addition to Minnkota's energy source since the Coyote coal-fired power plant came on line in 1981.

OFF-PEAK CONTROL HOURS Through February 8th





Manager's Comments

by Roger Johanneck



Winter disconnection

The body of Marvin Schur, 93, of Bay City, Mich., was found frozen in his home Jan. 17, four days after the Bay City Electric Light and Power company installed a power service limiter on his meter because Schur's energy bill was four month's delinquent.

News of Schur's death has caused an outcry that extends far outside the U.S. borders. Angry comments and blaming fingers are pointed mostly at Bay City Electric for their callous bill collection actions, which resulted in the death of this World War II vet who owed \$1,100 on his energy bill.

"How can a power company shut off someone's electricity in the middle of winter?" is the most often asked question being raised in all of this. Neighbors and family are being asked too: where were they, and why didn't they come to Schur's aid?

My fact gathering about this sad event has been limited to what I have read in the paper and on the Internet, like the rest of us. You may (4518001.03 Norris Thune) have questioned too, the bill collection practice and right of this utility and other utilities to shut off someone's power in the cold of winter. Does Red Lake Electric Cooperative (RLEC) disconnect power in winter when a bill goes unpaid?

I have to confess, my reaction to all the madness aimed at "the power company" had me on the defensive, even though it wasn't RLEC being blamed for Schur's death. I have been that person on the collecting end of the bills, been the one to have electric service interrupted or a meter disconnected because a customer didn't pay their bill.

I can't tell you what bill collection steps were taken by Bay City Electric Light and Power before they disconnected Schur's power, but I can tell you how winter collections are handled here at RLEC.

Collecting is a job taken seriously here at RLEC, with our actions and correspondence with customers well documented. The Minnesota

"Cold Weather Rule" sets forth guidelines of proper notification and a course of action for Cooperative utilities collecting delinquent bills during the six-month cold weather period, that runs from Oct. 15 to April 15. The Cold Weather Rule also provides direction for customers and what they need to do to avoid a disconnection of service.

Can a customer's power be shut off in the middle of winter for non-payment? Yes. Does it happen often? RLEC serves 5,000 customers and service interrupters were installed 11 times during the past six-month cold weather period.

No doubt, there is some advocating that power should not be disconnected in winter under any circumstances. If that were the case, if it was OK for one person to go without paying, then it would need to be OK for all of our customers to go without paying and not have the risk of disconnection during the six cold weather months. I don't know how RLEC could manage and survive that arrangement, providing electricity to all customers for six months without payment.

The limiting device used in Schur's case is a piece of equipment we have not used for a few years here at RLEC. The "service limiter" came about so that a utility would have some leverage in collecting delinquent bills without total disconnection of service. It is a way to provide customers enough power to keep a furnace working, water pipes from freezing and some lighting on.

The problem with a service limiter, as in Schur's case, is that it will trip or shut off when demand for electricity exceeds a certain limit, similar to a 20 amp breaker when it is overloaded. To restore power, appliances, etc., need to be shut off and a reset button pushed back in on the service limiter, which is located between the meter and the meter socket.

Today, instead of using the service limiter, RLEC uses a "service interrupter" which provides a cus-

tomers full power that cycles on and off every half-hour. The service interrupter, while used as a last resort for delinquent bill collections, is a better, safer method of restricting power use when all other methods to collect a bill have failed. The interrupter removes the risk of having power trip off and the need for a manual reset.

There are a number of steps taken prior to RLEC installing a service interrupter.

In addition to a bill, a customer receives a delinquent notice in the mail. Attempts to contact the customer are made by phone and in person by an employee of the cooperative. If the customer is not home to pay the bill, a note is fastened to a door with an explanation of why we stopped by and customers are given time to respond to our hand delivered note.

Another question raised in the rage over Schur's death was how far does the personal responsibility go for the power company? If RLEC suspects there are other concerns beyond that of a delinquent bill, we will call County Social Services or Law Enforcement to investigate where we cannot. Something that is not a part of the bill collection process is a collector entering a customer's home if no one responds to a knock on the door. Employees do not enter without permission from the customer.

Despite our best efforts to collect delinquent bills, each year a small amount of accounts are written off as uncollectible because former customers have left us with their unpaid bills. When a customer responds to a delinquent notice and calls us to make arrangements to pay their bill, we will help customers work through their delinquency by granting extra time to pay or put them in contact with an agency that can help them avoid a disconnection of service.

Collecting bills takes a considerable amount of time, but we will continue to work with all customers to avoid service interruptions. We pledge also to do our best to make sure that the bill you are paying for doesn't include the unpaid part of somebody else's.



Report from the Office

by Shirley Bregier

Off-peak meter reading failures

I hope the coldest part of the winter is behind us. Red Lake Electric has sold more kWh's during this cold spell than ever in the history of the Cooperative which has created some larger than normal electric bills.

In the past month, we have been investigating the off-peak meters that have not recorded usage over the past 12 months. In several we have found that the "turtle" (automated meter reading equipment) had failed. The turtle was either sending us the same reading every day or it wasn't sending us any meter data at all when the customer had been using their electric heat.

One of the requirements for the metering equipment to work properly is that power to the meter must be on so that meter data can be transmitted over the power line. During the non-heating months, some customers will turn the breaker off to the off-peak heating equipment. In some cases, when the

breaker is turned back on in the fall, the turtle doesn't respond and will fail to send a signal from the meter.

Other times the turtle device just failed during a time when the usage was low so the failure goes undetected with us assuming you are not using the electric heat and have decided to use another heat source.

During the very cold spell that we had this winter, we had customers call in and report their higher than normal bills. Upon getting the actual meter readings on the off-peak meter, in some cases, we were able to (5832003.03 Drew A. Larson) reduce the bill because the off-peak rates are lower than the normal billing rates. If you are using your off-peak electric heat, we ask that you periodically take a moment to check over your bill and make sure that your meter readings on the bill are in line with your meter, there is kWh usage showing on your current bill and that the meter is recording usage.

This is also true for the meters that aren't for electric heat. We monitor the meter data on a routine basis to make sure our equipment is working properly and that the readings we are getting for your meter looks correct. The tools we have in place are good but we are unable to catch all the problems. We also read meters anytime we are in the yard of our customers so we can compare your meter reading to the turtle reading.

Even with all this, we still need your help. We ask that you read your meters at least once a year to be sure that the meter reading is in line with the reading on your bill. If you suspect a problem, we'd like to hear from you. We would like to fix the problem before it creates a large bill for you.

DNR publishes online reference guide to rare species in Minn.

Information about Minnesota's endangered, threatened, and special-concern plant and animal species is now available in a new online reference tool from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Rare Species Guide replaces the 1988 DNR book, "Minnesota's Endangered Flora and Fauna," and is available at www.mndnr.gov/rsg

"Minnesota citizens, land managers and others can use this interactive, easy to use reference for information about the state's rarest species," said DNR project manager, Sarah Wren.

The comprehensive web resource combines knowledge from years of scientific study and management experience by DNR biologists and external experts. It

includes a collection of profiles of more than 400 rare species. Each profile features life history, habitat, and conservation information, as well as Minnesota and North American range maps and species photographs and/or illustrations.

The guide allows users to search for species profiles based on common or scientific name; state and federal endangerment status; broad taxonomic group (such as mammals or birds); habitat; location (including counties, watersheds, and ecological classification system subsections); and/or keyword.

In addition to the species profiles, the Rare Species Guide also includes information on Minnesota's endangered species law and permits, why species become rare, and much more.

**The Gazette . . . only \$29
in Red Lake County**



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 \$15 to \$21 month
First 500 KWH8.0¢ Kwh
Over 500 KWH (April-Dec.)5.7¢ Kwh
Over 500 KWH (Jan.-Mar.)6.5¢ Kwh
Multiphase users add \$16/month cost of service charge.

Standby, \$8/month (meter disconnected but the power line retained; standby is not available on services larger than 15 KVA transformer capacity).

Security light, \$6/month, high pressure sodium, \$7/month, mercury vapor; water heater flat credit, \$5/month (on January-April billing); off-peak equipment charge, \$3.50/month per heat meter; off-peak electric heat rate, 3.5¢/kWh long-term control, 5.0¢/kWh short-term control.

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

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. 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

Beefy Wild Rice Soup

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- 6 c. water, divided
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 3 celery ribs, chopped
- 1 c. uncooked wild rice
- 2 tsp. beef bouillon granules
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1/4 tsp. hot pepper sauce
- 3 cans (10-3/4 oz. each) condensed cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
- 1 can (4 oz.) mushroom stems and pieces, drained

In a Dutch oven or soup kettle, cook beef and Italian seasoning over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Add 2 c. water, onions, celery, rice, bouillon, pepper and hot pepper sauce; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 45 minutes. Stir in the soup, mushrooms and remaining water. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes or until heated through. Yield: 10 to 12 servings (3 qt.).

Vegetable Soup

- 1 beef chuck roast (3 to 4 lb.)
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2-1/2 qt. water
- 3 cans (28 oz. each) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 10 celery ribs, chopped
- 6 large carrots, thinly sliced
- 3 large onions, chopped
- 3/4 c. medium pearl barley
- 2/3 c. cut fresh green beans (1/2-inch pieces)
- 1 can (15-1/4 oz.) whole kernel corn, drained
- Salt and pepper to taste

In a large soup kettle, brown the roast in oil. Add water; cover and simmer for 2-1/2 to 3 hours or until meat is tender. Drain; set roast aside. In the same kettle, combine the tomatoes, celery, carrots, onions, barley and beans. Cover and simmer for 50 minutes or until the barley is tender. Cut beef into 1/2-in. cubes; add to soup. Stir in corn, salt and pepper; heat through. Yield: 26 servings (6-1 /2 qt.).

Cheddar Chicken Spaghetti

- 1 package (7 oz.) spaghetti, broken
- 2 c. cubed cooked chicken
- 2 c. (8 oz.) shredded cheddar cheese, divided
- 1 can (10-3/4 oz.) condensed cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- 1 c. milk
- 1 Tbsp. diced pimientos, optional
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper

Cook spaghetti according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a bowl, combine the chicken, 1 c. cheese, soup, milk, pimientos if desired, salt and pepper. Drain spaghetti; add to the chicken mixture and toss to coat. Transfer to a greased 13-in. by 9-in. by 2-in. baking dish. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese. Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes or until heated through. Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

Ham 'N' Egg Pizza

- 1 tube (8 oz.) refrigerated crescent rolls
- 3 eggs
- 2 Tbsp. milk
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 2 c. finely chopped fully cooked ham
- 1 c. frozen shredded hash brown potatoes
- 1 c. (4 oz.) shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 c. shredded Parmesan cheese

Unroll crescent roll dough and place on an ungreased 12-in. pizza pan. Press onto the bottom and 1/4 in. up the sides, sealing seams and perforations. Bake at 375 degrees for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, in a bowl, beat eggs, milk and pepper. Sprinkle ham, hash browns and cheddar cheese over crust. Carefully pour egg mixture over cheese. Sprinkle with Parmesan. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until eggs are completely set. Yield: 6 servings.

Upside-Down Pizza

- 1 lb. bulk Italian sausage
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/4 c. chopped green pepper
- 2 Tbsp. plus 1 c. all-purpose flour, divided
- 1/2 tsp. dried basil
- 1/2 tsp. fennel seed, crushed
- 1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce
- 2 c. (8 oz.) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 2 eggs
- 1 c. milk
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese, optional

In a saucepan, cook sausage, onion and green pepper over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in 2 Tbsp. flour, basil and fennel; mix well. Add tomato sauce. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes. Transfer to an ungreased 13-in. by 9-in. by 2-in. baking dish. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese.

Place the remaining flour in a mixing bowl.

Beat in the eggs, milk, oil and salt until smooth; stir in Parmesan cheese if desired. Pour over casserole. Bake, uncovered, at 425 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes or until browned. Yield: 8 servings.

Electric space heater safety tips and statistics



Each year, portable heating equipment - a subcategory of heating fires that includes electric space heaters - is responsible for thousands of unnecessary deaths.

As the temperatures drop during winter, many families will increase their use of alternative heat sources, such as portable electric space heaters, to help warm their homes. If used improperly, this indoor heating equipment presents increased risk of fire, electric shock and electrocution.

This article provides information to help ensure that electric space heaters are safely used and maintained in the home and outlines safety precautions that can be taken to mitigate the hazards posed by indoor heating equipment this winter.

Safety Tips

- Read the manufacturer's instruction manual before using any space heater. Check to make sure the heater bears the mark of a certified testing organization.
- Keep space heaters at least 3 ft. away from any combustible materials such as bedding, clothing, draperies, furniture and rugs.
- Keep space heaters away from areas with water. Check your manual to be sure the heater is intended to be used in locations such as bathrooms.
- Don't use space heaters in rooms where children are unsupervised. Children may stick their fingers or other objects through the protective guards, causing burns or shock.
- Do not use space heaters with extension cords; plug directly into an outlet on a relatively unburdened circuit.
- Space heaters have hot parts

that can cause sparking. Do not use them in areas where flammable liquids such as gasoline or kerosene are used or stored.

- Space heaters are meant to supply supplemental heat. Do not use them to warm bedding, cook food, dry clothing or thaw pipes.
- Turn off, unplug and safely store portable space heaters when not in use.
- When plugging in a space heater, make sure that the circuit can adequately and safely handle the added demand.

- Never remove the grounding feature on a plug by clipping or grinding off the third prong.
- If you do not have a three-hole outlet, use an adapter to connect the heater's three-prong plug. Make sure the adapter ground wire or tab is attached to the outlet ground.
- Check the cord before plugging in the heater. If frayed, worn or broken, do not use it. Be sure to either have an electrician replace the cord or replace the heater. Simply putting tape on the cord is not enough to prevent overheating and

fire.

Safety Statistics

- Heating equipment was involved in an estimated 53,000 home fires in the U.S. last year (NFPA).
- These fires accounted for 14 percent of all home fires and were responsible for an estimated 260 deaths, 1,300 injuries and \$500 million in property damage.
- The peak months for residential portable heating fires are January and February.
- More than 25,000 residential fires every year are associated with the use of space or room heaters, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).
- In 2005, space heaters accounted for one-third (32 percent) of home heating fires and three-fourths (73 percent) of home heating fire deaths (NFPA).
- Heating equipment placed too close to flammable materials, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding, is the leading factor contributing to home heating fires and deaths.
- During the past decade, the CPSC has issued recalls of 32 electric heaters of all different types.
- Portable heating equipment fires account for only 10 percent of all heating fires; however, they are responsible for 30 percent and 40 percent of heating injuries and deaths, respectively (USFA).
- Thirty-three percent of people surveyed by ESFI admitted to keeping their space heaters running overnight and 19 percent admitted to leaving them unattended.

Source: The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI).

Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc. Operating Report MONTHLY COMPARISON

	DECEMBER 2007	DECEMBER 2008
Total Revenue	\$ 960,820	\$ 976,015
Total Margins	\$ 159,032	\$ 57,880
Cost of Power	\$ 574,138	\$ 644,375
KWH's Purchased	15,836,132	17,240,337
Capital Credits Paid to Estates	\$ 12,705	\$ 7,256

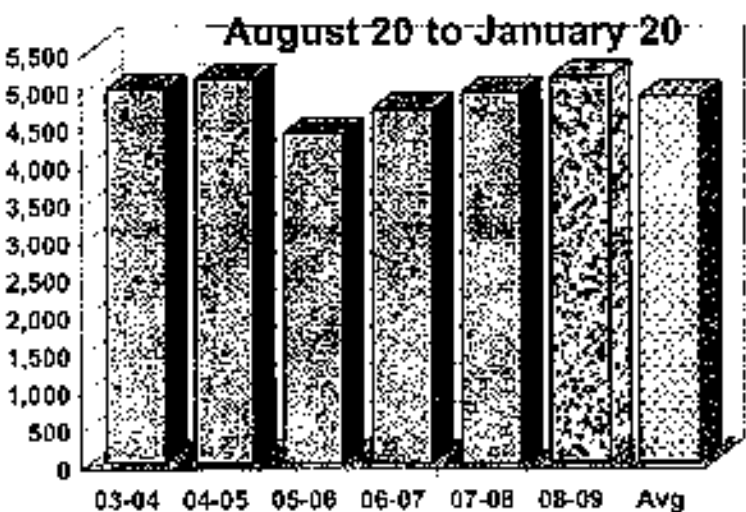
YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON

	DECEMBER 2007	DECEMBER 2008
Total Revenue	\$ 8,162,961	\$ 8,998,953
Total Margins	\$ 749,227	\$ 783,922
Cost of Power	\$ 5,204,604	\$ 5,862,033
KWH's Purchased	129,957,140	141,707,435
New Service Connections	52	77
Customers Served	5,097	5,163
Capital Credits Paid to Estates	\$ 117,393	\$ 75,419
Miles of Line		
Overhead	2,324	2,319
Underground	231	235

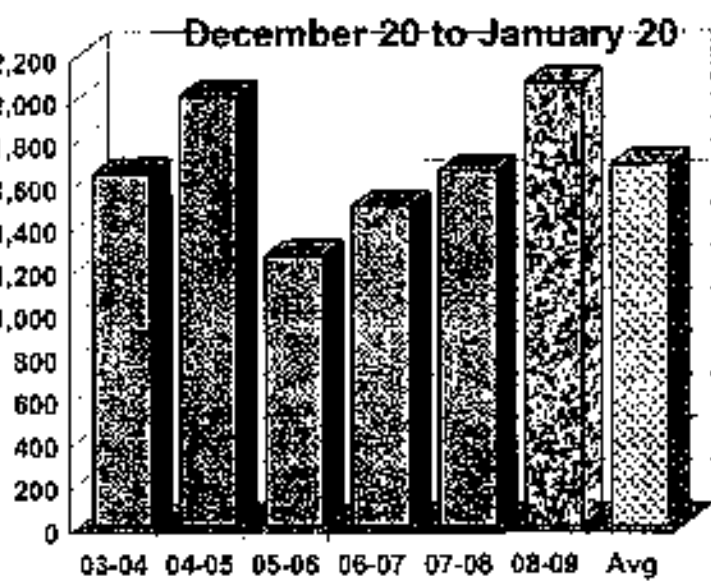
DEGREE DAYS

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



DEGREE DAYS



DNR sends reminder to dog owners

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds dog owners that it is illegal to allow their pets to harass deer and other big game.

Every winter, conservation officers receive reports from throughout the state of dogs chasing and sometimes killing deer or other big game. Wildlife regulations hold dog owners accountable for dogs chasing big game and conservation officers are authorized to put down dogs that do so. Dog owners would also be subject to a civil penalty.

Capt. Ken Soring, acting DNR enforcement chief, advises dog owners to be aware of the possibility that their dogs may be chasing big game and to take steps to prevent them from doing so.



vent them from doing so.

"Deer are particularly vulnerable at this time of year because they are expending every bit of energy to stay alive and the additional stress

of being chased can affect their winter survival," Soring said.

The Minnesota Game and Fish Laws handbook reads that a person who observes a dog wounding, killing or pursuing in a manner that endangers big game may kill the dog without liability: At any time, if the person is a peace officer or conservation officer, or between Jan. 1 and July 14, if the person is not a peace officer or conservation officer and the discharge of firearms is allowed.

DNR issues ice safety reminder

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) water safety officials have issued an ice safety reminder now that temperatures have surpassed 40 degrees in many areas of the state.

"Even with the relatively thick ice produced by our cold January, it doesn't take very long for ice conditions to become hazardous when it warms up," said Tim Smalley, DNR water safety specialist. "That's especially true for vehicles."

The usual safety guidelines for cars (8-12 inches of new, clear ice) don't apply under this week's melting conditions. The slush created on the ice's surface adds weight. The ice also softens farther down and may have less than half the

strength of the same thickness of ice earlier in the season.

"A good rule of thumb is that when the temperature rises above freezing for six of the last 24 hours, multiply the recommended minimum thickness by two," Smalley said.

The ice becomes unsafe if temperatures remain above freezing for 24 hours or more. Contact a local bait shop or resort to ask about the conditions of any lake.

For more information on ice thickness guidelines, videos and more, visit mndnr.gov/safety/ice.

Ice safety pamphlets can be ordered from the DNR's information center at 651-296-6157 or 888-646-6367.

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VOLTS AND JOLTS FEATURE OF THE MONTH

Townsend Pricing offers supplies to businesses across the U.S.

Employees at Townsend Pricing, Inc. in Thief River Falls are, front from left, Allie Nelson, Rynae Harder, Lisa Anderson, Jill Jonson, Julie Harbott, Dani Miller, Ashley Olson; back, Sharon Pahlen, Elaine Schmidt, Larry Bjerken, Kim Martell, Darby Trontvedt, Jamie Kraemer and Heidi Carlson. Not pictured are Beth Naslund, Jan J. Walter, Dorothy Nelson, Kim Olson and Dawn Fore.

By Destiny Harmoning
Townsend Pricing, Inc. in Thief River Falls offers retail supplies to corporate and small businesses across the United States.
The company was started in 1988 by Darrell Wagner of Thief River Falls, who still owns the company. Townsend Pricing is operated by man-

ager Beth Naslund.
Twenty employees make up the business, which is located just outside of Thief River Falls on Highway 59 South. They operate in five departments: shipping/receiving, customer service, sales, accounting and web sales.

Townsend Pricing offers a variety of products to meet business needs.

Townsend Pricing boasts 14,000 customer accounts. About half of them actively purchase products from the company. Some of their more well-known corporate clients include Eddie Bauer, Lowe's, Ron Jon Surf Shop and Maurices. They also have many local clients including Thrifty White Drug and Twice But Nice in Thief River Falls.
Products available at Townsend Pricing include price marking labels, cash register paper, price cards, barcode labels, retail store supplies, bags, hangers, laser labels, clothing tags, attacher guns, business forms and gift wrapping supplies.
Products ordered from Townsend Pricing typically ship within 24 hours.
In order to keep their prices competitive, Townsend Pricing shops and compares prices with companies across America. They buy some of their products from Washington, New York and locally.
"We'll get it right or we'll make it right," reads Townsend Pricing's guarantee. "Our goal is to provide our customers with excellent service, quality products and competitive prices."
For more information on Townsend Pricing, or to order products, call 218-681-8447 or toll-free 800-221-2421 or visit www.yourstoresupplies.com.

The sales staff at Townsend Pricing calls on about 14,000 customer accounts.

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Following each member meeting, attendees were treated to a beverage, pie and ice cream. Pictured are many of the members who attended the District 2 meeting held Jan. 27 in Holt.



District 7 meeting attendees listened intently to information presented at the meeting. The meeting was held Feb. 2 at Oak Park Lutheran Church.



Helga McBride, Middle River, was the winner of an electric knife at the District 2 meeting held Jan. 27.



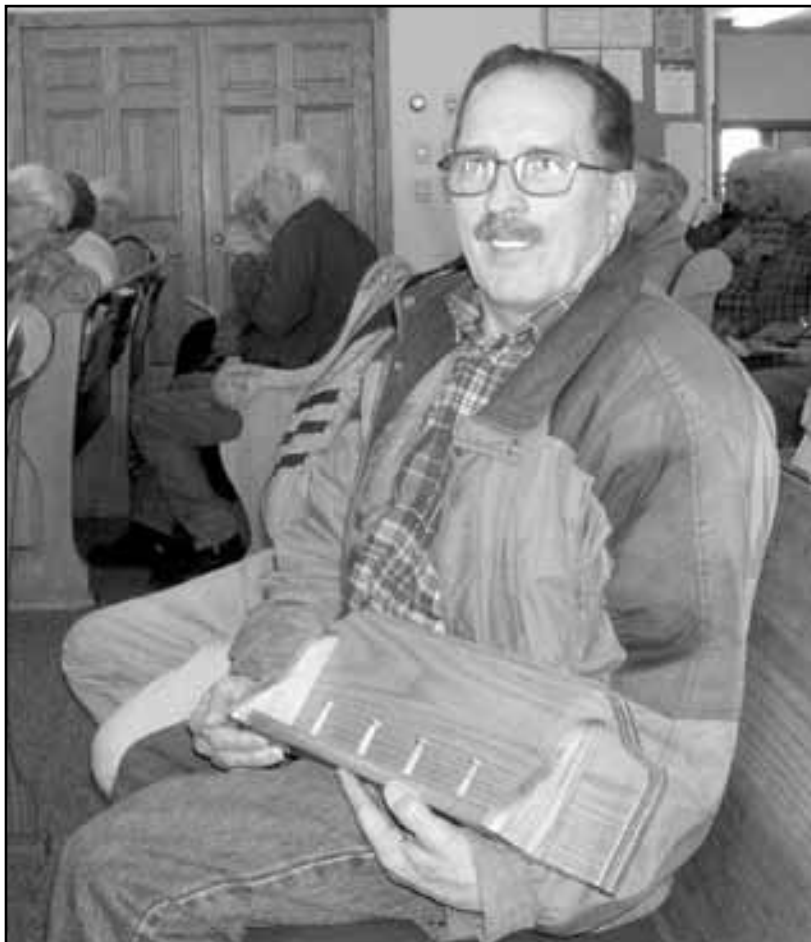
Marjorie Steinhauer, Thief River Falls, served as chairperson during the business meeting of District 2.



Marion Davidson, Newfolden, recorded the minutes during the District 2 business session.



Meeting attendee David Morgan of Crookston won a crock pot at the Gentilly informational meeting held Jan. 29 at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Gentilly.



Richard Kostrzewski, Thief River Falls, won an oak shelf at the District 2 meeting held at Nazareth Lutheran Church in Holt.



Cathy and Linus Derosier, Red Lake Falls, were prize winners at Red Lake Electric's informational meeting held Jan. 29 in Gentilly.



Herb Spinler, Crookston, won a thermos carafe at Red Lake Electric's informational meeting held at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Gentilly.



Serving as chairperson, during the business session, at the District 7 meeting was Ernie Swanson of Goodridge.



Karen Peterson, Trail, served as recording secretary during the business session of the District 7 meeting.



Judy Rustan, Oklee, won a flashlight at the District 7 meeting held Feb. 2.



Juell Chervestad, Oklee, displays the oak shelf he won at the District 7 meeting at Oak Park Lutheran Church.



Ginny Armstrong, Thief River Falls, served as chairperson at the District 8 meeting during the business session. The meeting was held Feb. 5.



Fran Skadsem of Thief River Falls recorded the minutes of the business session at the District 8 meeting. The meeting was held at St. John's Lutheran School.



Red Lake Electric's District 8 meeting was held Feb. 5 at St. John's Lutheran School in rural Thief River Falls. Pictured are some of the Cooperative's members who were in attendance.

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TC40DA MFD loader	\$19,500
966 IH CAB pto no/ 3PT	\$6,700
TS100 2488hrs 8x2 trans	\$22,000
DX55 case MFD loader	\$25,950
399 Massey MFD/loader	\$20,500
TW 5 Ford MFD loader	\$24,000
936 20.8x38 8000hrs	\$28,000
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TC33D loader MFD	\$16,000

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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 2009 annual meeting of the Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Attest _____
Chairman or President

Attest _____
Clerk or Secretary

Director nominations, petitions due Feb. 23

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 Robert Olson, Middle River, District 2; Kelly Lundeen, Trail, District 7; and Robert Finstad, Thief River Falls, District 8.

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 Red Lake Falls by 10 a.m. Feb. 23.

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 meet-

ing March 25 at the Ralph Englestad Arena in Thief River Falls.

Petition forms are available at the RLEC office in Red Lake Falls.

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

Contact Roger Johanneck, cooperative manager, at 800-245-6068 or 253-2168 for more information.

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 reelection 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.

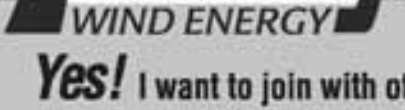
Join the harvest

The Infinity Wind Energy program was developed by our power supplier, Minnkota Power Cooperative, to bring wind-generated electricity to customers of the associated distribution systems in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota.

Presently, two 900-kilowatt, commercial-scale wind turbines are producing wind energy for customers enrolled in the program. One turbine is located six miles east of Valley City, N.D., along I-94 and the other, three miles east of Petersburg, N.D., along Highway 2.

To date, hundreds of customers across the region have made the decision to purchase blocks of wind-generated electricity through the Infinity program. Today, we're inviting you to join us, and others, to help harvest the energy of the wind.





Yes! I want to join with others and participate in the *Infinity Wind Energy* program.

Please indicate the number of 100 kilowatt-hour *Infinity Wind Energy* blocks you wish to purchase each month. Each 100 kilowatt-hour *Infinity Wind Energy* block costs an additional 30¢ per month.

<input type="checkbox"/>	1 block (100 kilowatt-hours per month), \$0.30/mo.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 blocks (200 kilowatt-hours per month), \$0.60/mo.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 blocks (300 kilowatt-hours per month), \$0.90/mo.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 blocks (400 kilowatt-hours per month), \$1.20/mo.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 blocks (500 kilowatt-hours per month), \$1.50/mo.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other – Please specify the total number of 100 kilowatt-hour <i>Infinity Wind Energy</i> blocks you wish to purchase per month: _____, \$ _____/mo.

If you require assistance in determining the number of wind power blocks you wish to purchase, call Red Lake Electric Cooperative at 218-253-2168 or toll-free 1-800-245-6068. We will be happy to assist you.

Name _____

Address _____

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Account number (located on your bill) _____

E-mail address (optional) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

I understand that my commitment is for one year and will continue on an annual basis until I notify you in writing to end my participation in the *Infinity* program.

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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.

The Auto Pay service is free of charge. Not only is this service free, you will eliminate the expense of writing a check, postage to mail your payment and no more late payment penalties because your bill will be paid on time, every month, for you.

Your payment will be automatically made for you on the 5th of each month. If the 5th falls on a week-

end 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.

AUTO PAY SIGN-UP SHEET

I authorize Red Lake Electric Cooperative (RLEC) and the bank listed below to initiate variable entries to my checking or savings account. This authorization remains in effect until I notify RLEC in writing to cancel it in such time as to allow RLEC to act on it.

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