



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 2010



Pictured are some of the members who attended the RLEC District 3 meeting held Feb. 8 in Newfolden. This meeting had the largest attendance with 60 people.

Member meetings held recently

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

An informational meeting was held Feb. 1 at Ekelund Lutheran Church in rural Goodridge. Topics reviewed at this meeting and all of the district meetings included Conservation Improvement Program, load management, electric statement explanation, wind generation and electric rate outlook.

The District 9 meeting was held Feb. 2 at Black River Lutheran

Church in rural Red Lake Falls. Cooperative members in attendance unanimously elected Peter Mosbeck, the incumbent director, as the director candidate from the district.

The District 3 meeting was held Feb. 8 at the Newfolden Community Center. Sixty members were in attendance and unanimously elected Colette Kujava as the director candidate from the district. Previous director Joyce Johnson did not seek re-election.

The District 6 meeting was held Feb. 9 at the Red Lake Falls Com-

munity Hall. Nominations for district director included Dan Schmitz and Randy Versdahl. Versdahl was elected as the director candidate. Henry Wieland has served as director for 28 years and did not seek re-election.

A total of 169 people attended the four meetings. Those in attendance (4725002.06 Gene Marquis) had an opportunity to win door prizes and were served pie, ice cream and refreshments. Thank you to the members that took time to attend one of the meetings.

Operation Round Up® grant applications due March 3

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 3.

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 80 percent of RLEC members now choose to contribute pennies each month to enhance their communities.

Funds will be donated primarily to non-profit organizations to help fund their specific projects or programs. Since the program began in



1993, \$331,718 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 Randy

Knutson, Newfolden; 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 form is also available on the Cooperative's Web site at www.redlake-electric.com.

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

The Minnesota Trade-in and Save Appliance Program

Starting March 1, the Minnesota Office of Energy Security plans to launch its energy-efficient appliance rebate program using \$5 million received for this activity through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The Minnesota Trade-in and Save Appliance Program will give residents a rebate for (3830012.02 John R. and Lee A. Harwarth) replacing their appliance energy hog with a new EnergyStar model.

Minnesota homeowners are encouraged to begin their research now by visiting www.mnappliancerebate.com.

Through the program, 25,000 Minnesota homeowners will receive a rebate when replacing their old appliance with a qualifying EnergyStar model purchased from a Minnesota retailer.

Rebates are not retroactive for



purchases made before March 1. Purchases can be made at any retail location in Minnesota, online purchases do not qualify. The program ends when the funds are exhausted.

Minnesota's allocation of \$5,009,000 includes rebates on clothes washers (\$200), dishwashers (\$150), freezers (\$100 with purchase and proof of demanufacturing, \$50 for purchase only) and refrigerators over 7.75 cubic feet (\$200 with purchase and proof of demanufacturing, \$100 for purchase only). Proof of demanufacturing will certify the appliance has been removed from the grid and will not be resold or reused.

Reservations for rebate applications begins March 1 at 8 a.m. at www.mnappliancerebate.com or by calling the program's toll-free number at 877-230-9119.

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Power Savers launches new efficiency programs

Helping your home or business take advantage of cost-effective energy efficiency programs is the focus of Power Savers — a Conservation Improvement Program formed by Red Lake Electric Cooperative and other area utilities.

For those considering efficiency upgrades, the timing couldn't be better. Thousands of dollars in rebates and incentives are available.

But the best deal may be coming with the addition of two new programs that give customers free access to energy-saving measures.

The Commercial and Residential Direct Install programs offer customers the opportunity to go through a quick energy assessment of their home or business with a staff member from Red Lake Electric. While on site they will install energy-saving measures free of charge and offer other energy-efficiency tips. These items include CFLs, bath and kitchen faucet aerators, low-flow showerheads, pre-rinse sprayer valves and LED exit light retrofits where applicable.

These programs are valued at \$58.53 for residential customers and \$337.53 for commercial accounts. At the same time, residential customers could see savings of \$166 on their annual bill, while commercial accounts could have \$414 in savings.

"If home or business owners are considering efficiency upgrades, it's an ideal time to do so under this program," said Kevin Reich, Member Services Manager. "We are able to identify the largest energy users and replace them with newer, more efficient models that will save



money in the long run."

While opportunities for energy savings abound, the real advantage of the program is the ability to go through each area of your home or business (2635001.04 Scott Peters) and speak one-on-one with a representative from your cooperative.

To get started on a quick energy assessment or to learn about other energy-efficiency programs, contact Red Lake Electric.

Getting Started

Members from your cooperative and other utilities attended training seminars for the Residential and Business Direct Install programs in early December.

After reviewing the forms and learning the basics of each program, the group conducted its first Direct Install quick energy assessment at Oak Hills Christian College, located outside of Bemidji, Minn., on Lake Marquette.

Oak Hills was an ideal place to conduct several of the assessments. The college has cafeterias, dorm rooms, offices and other unique areas. Each zone of the campus was examined by the class, followed by discussion to determine the best energy-efficiency improvements for that area.

"We have quite a variety of old and new when it comes to electrical and heating systems and lighting," said Chuck Allen, Oak Hills direc-

tor of facilities and maintenance. "We have stuff that has been put in during the past year that is pretty efficient, and stuff that is years and years old that we're looking to replace in the future."

"We were pretty well

aware of where we stood, and they helped confirm the direction that we need to go."

The group performed an abbreviated audit, identifying potential savings within the campus over a three-day period. They installed 107 pieces of energy-efficient equipment at no cost to the college.

"We're always looking, primarily not for the gifts, but just for the communication," Allen said. "We like to be interactive with the neighborhood and businesses in town and this was a wonderful opportunity to have that exchange of ideas."

As a Beltrami Electric Cooperative member, Oak Hills now has an energy savings potential of 12,676 kilowatt-hours (kWh) and \$891.87 annually.

"It's always nice to have outside input on what's going on," Allen said. "There are so many new products out there and so many different areas to touch when you're looking for ideas. It's always helpful to have input, especially from the experts."

Energy conservation and efficiency have reached a new level of importance for Minnesota cooperatives and municipalities. State legislators are transitioning utilities from a spending requirement to an energy savings program. Minnesota requires utilities to save 1.5 percent of annual retail energy sales.

Direct Install Program for Commercial and Residential Customers

Estimated total kWh Annual Savings

| C=Commercial R=Residential | Measure | Deemed Savings (kWh) | Low (\$.07/kWh) | High (\$.09/kWh) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| C, R | CFLs (Res. max 6; Comm. max 12) | 39 | \$3 | \$4 |
| C, R | Kitchen Aerators | 191 | \$13 | \$17 |
| C, R | Bath Aerators | 191 | \$13 | \$17 |
| C, R | Showerheads | 468 | \$33 | \$42 |
| C | Pre-Rinse Sprayers (max 2) | 957 | \$67 | \$86 |
| C | LED Exit Sign Retro (max 4) | 166 | \$12 | \$15 |
| C, R | Water Heater Turndown | 758 | \$53 | \$68 |
| | Commercial Total | 4,654 | \$326 | \$419 |
| | Residential Total | 1,842 | \$129 | \$166 |

Power Rinse Pre-Spray Valve, \$85 each, max 2

2.2 GPM Dual Setting Kitchen Aerator with swivel, \$4.25 each

Earth@Massage 1.5 GPM Showerhead, \$19.99 each

23-Watt CFL Bulb (Res. max 6; Comm. max 12), \$5.50 each

Bathroom Faucet Aerator 1.5 GPM, \$1.29 each

LED Exit Light Replacement Kits, White bulbs, max 4, \$19 each

Total value of direct install items installed in your home or business

Residential

Commercial

\$170.00

\$4.25

\$4.25

\$19.99

\$19.99

\$33.00

\$66.00

\$1.29

\$1.29

N/A

\$76.00

\$58.53

\$337.53

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 31, 2010, at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls.

The meeting agenda includes year 2009 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



Manager's Comments

by Roger Johanneck



Membership meetings

Elsewhere in this month's *Volts and Jolts* is a recap of the Cooperative's membership meetings held earlier this month. I'd like to add a few things to that summary before we put the district meetings to rest for another year.

Average attendance at this year's four meetings was 42; up from recent years but about the same to what we have averaged (45) for the past 15 years. The trend for attendance at these meetings has seen a gradual decline over this 15-year period. Numbers show that meeting attendance in general is less than what it used to be, not only for Red Lake Electric Cooperative, but for our rural electric neighbors as well.

Despite all the time-saving gadgets we have to make life simpler, the demands for our time don't seem to be any less and we have yet to come up with something that allows us to be in two places at the same time. If you've figured out how to do that, please let me know, I would find that helpful, I think.

We have heard from some of you that said you would have liked to have attended one of the meetings, but other commitments kept that from happening. We make every effort to schedule our membership meetings on nights or afternoons, that are not conflicting with other events, but that is just about impossible to do given the number

of high school sporting events, fund-raising events, caucuses, etc. that are scheduled this time of year.

Per the Cooperative's by-law requirements, we have a 20-day window of time to hold the district meetings. We typically like to hold the meetings earlier rather than later (5235003.02 Albert G. Fisher) in case the weather necessitates a postponement of a meeting to a later date.

Even with the general decline in attendance at these meetings, we as staff and your board of directors think the process we have in place (as outlined in the Cooperative by-laws), to elect directors, is a good one.

Gazette to publish cookbook

The *Gazette* is seeking local recipes for publication in a Red Lake County community cookbook.

Recipes in categories such as appetizers and beverages; breakfast; breads and rolls; soups, salads and sandwiches; meats and main dishes; vegetables and side dishes; camping; cakes, pies and desserts; cookies, bars and candies; this and that; and canning are requested from citizens or former residents of the county.

All recipe entries should include all information necessary for making the dish and the community member submitting the entry (first

and last name; maiden name optional). Other information may be included with the recipe: a high quality photograph of the finished dish, family origin or cultural significance, cooking tips or facts and any notes.

All recipes are due into the *Gazette* by March 31. Recipes can be dropped off at the office, mailed to PO Box 370, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750 or emailed to rlfgaz@gvtel.com. Recipes will not be returned.

The community cookbook will become available for purchase at a later date.

Informational Web Sites

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

- Electrical Safety Foundation International: www.esfi.org
- Alliance to Save Energy: www.ase.org
- US Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov/greenhomes
- Energy Star: www.energystar.gov
- Minnesota Safety Council: www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org
- Safe Electricity: www.safeelectricity.org
- Lighting Controls Association: www.aboutlightingcontrols.org

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.



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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.



Report from the Office

by Shirley Bregier

The components of your electric bill

The Red Lake Electric District meetings for 2010 are history. It was really nice to see so many of our members attend these meetings. I really (5332001.01 David M. Ulrich) enjoy visiting with our members and getting to know you. It is an opportunity for you to find out what your Cooperative is doing as well as being able to nominate the member you wish to represent you on the Cooperative's board of directors.

One of the topics I talked about at our district meeting was the components of your electric bill. We get questions daily about the charges on your electric bill so I thought this would be a good topic to write

my article on this month.

Your electric bill of course shows the amount of kilowatt hours (kWhs) you used during that billing period. The kWhs are broke down by the different rates showing your main usage and your off-peak usage.

Next on the bill is the facilities charge. This is a charge to recover a portion of the cost of bringing electricity to your yard. This includes the poles, wires, meter, meter loop, transformer and the cost to maintain these items.

The off-peak equipment charge is the facilities charge for the off-peak equipment that you have. Currently the off-peak charge is \$4 per

month.

The renewable wind energy surcharge is 1/2 cent per kWh used during the billing period. This charge is a pass-through rate increase from Minnkota Power Cooperative, our wholesale power supplier. This surcharge is to help Minnkota recover a revenue shortfall of nearly \$20 million in 2009 due to lower market prices they received from surplus energy sales in the wholesale market. This surcharge is expected to last through October 2010.

The portion of the bill labeled "HPS 100 Sec Light" or "MV 175 Sec Light" is for the rental fee for the security light you have on your yard pole. This charge covers the electricity your security light uses as well as any maintenance the light may need.

From the Mail Bag

Dear RLEC:

Thank you for drawing my name at the District 6 meeting as the winner of an electric knife.

Sincerely,
JoAnn Derosier
Red Lake Falls

Dear RLEC:

The Catholic Daughter members of Court St. Cecilia wish to thank you for the opportunity to bake and serve pie, topped with ice cream, for the District 6 Red Lake Electric Cooperative meeting at City Hall Feb. 9. Our CDA members enjoyed the camaraderie preparing the pies, along with serving the lunch following the district meeting. The funds raised will help replenish our court's scholarship offer and will be used for other needy charities. We sincerely appreciate and thank you for considering us to fulfill this need.

JoAnn Derosier, CDA Regent
Red Lake Falls

Dear RLEC:

Thank you for the screwdriver set I won at your meeting in Newfolden. Kevin, thank you for the good story in the *Volts and Jolts* about the 125th Anniversary of Bethania Lutheran Church.

Sandra Steinhauer
Thief River Falls

Dear RLEC:

The Red Lake County Sheriff's Office would like to express our sincere thanks for financially supporting our child safety and drug education program.

We feel that it is our duty to provide the public with the protection and safeguards expected of us. Our planned child safety and drug education program will help us do that.

You have recognized that we desperately need to reach our children with accurate and vital facts that will educate and help them grow as safe, happy and useful citizens.

The materials and services we have carefully selected were developed exclusively by the National Child Safety Council, a non-profit, tax-exempt organization.

Because of your generous support, we are able to provide a well-rounded child safety and drug education program for our children. Without your help this could not have been possible.

Thanks again, not only from the Red Lake County Sheriff's Office, but also from all the young people who will be touched by your helping hand.

Mitch Bernstein
Red Lake County Sheriff



Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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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 KWH |9.0¢ 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.

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VOLTS AND JOLTS FEATURE OF THE MONTH

Burns Welding and Repair offers a variety of products and services

By Destiny Harmoning

Rodney Burns, owner and operator of Burns Welding and Repair of rural Thief River Falls, grew up in Buffalo, N.D. He moved to the Plummer area in 1978 and has been in his current location near Thief River Falls for the past 20 years.

He graduated high school in Buffalo and attended college in Whapeton, N.D. where he studied welding and auto mechanics.

He married Diane Sletten, a native of Plummer, in 1978. They have five children, Nicole, Jeremy, Jared, Allison and Nichola and six grandchildren.

Rodney enjoys watching stockcar racing and Nascar and likes to fish when he has time. He also helps his wife with garden and yard work. He has been the treasurer of Mayfield Township for 20 years.

Burns Welding opened for business 10 years ago. Prior to that, Rodney farmed for many years, raising dairy cattle, and then worked at Arctic Cat in Thief River Falls, where he was a welder.

His job at Arctic Cat required a lot of travel and so eventually Rodney left the position in order to stay home more with his family. That's when he started his own welding company, located on his land south of Thief River Falls.

Rodney laughed about the fact that now he stays home but his wife works in town. She is a Head Start teacher at Challenger Elementary School.

Rodney followed a welding career path because he knows how to fix things. "My dad always taught me, anything that falls apart you fix," Rodney said. "I like to do it, it comes naturally to me."

Rodney started his welding business by helping out other companies with surplus job orders; the business has grown from there.

He still works with other companies including Erskine Manufacturing, Forsbergs and Central Boiler. When these companies get more work than they can handle, they look to Burns Welding to get the job done.

Rodney has three full-time employees and two part-time. His full-time employees are Dan Sletten, Dusty Knutson and Jeff Kriedeman.

His wife also helps him out. "Her and I work together pretty good," Rodney said.

Burns Welding offers a wide array of commodities and services from



Full-time Employees of Burns Welding and Repair are, from left, owner and operator Rodney Burns, Dan Sletten, Jeff Kriedeman and Dusty Knutson.

welding repair to custom-made products.

Burns Welding's line of cattle equipment includes cattle panels, walk through panels, swinging gates, hay rings and feed panels. All equipment is made with 14-gauge steel tubing and is customizable to suit the consumer's needs.

All the cattle equipment is what Rodney calls "Ben approved". Ben is a very large pet bull in the Burns family.

A new product line that Burns Welding offers consists of yard and small farm maintenance equipment that works with ATVs including cultivators, box scrapers, maintainers, corn planters and rock pickers. These are available for sale and for rent.

Burns Welding also does custom welding and made-to-order ornamental welding projects including fire rings, free-standing bird feeders and address signs.

"Just about anything you need to get made we can make it," Rodney said.

Rodney explained a variety of welding projects have come through his

door since the start of his business, including a covered wagon, gravel trucks, off-road trucks and scrapers.

"We have a lot of strange things that come through," he said. "Whatever we can get our hands on, we work on."

The most common type of welding jobs Rodney and his employees have handled is machinery that breaks down.

One of the most challenging jobs that Rodney has worked on was turning a cable scraper hydraulic.

"That was one of our bigger challenges, but once you do it once, you learn from the experience," Rodney said.

Another challenge can be working with aluminum products. Rodney explained that often times the aluminum gets weak and rots out. Burns Welding offers welding on aluminum and stainless steel products.

The turnaround time on customer orders all depends on the type of job. Rodney said if he can get the parts in, it usually only takes one to two days to complete a job.

In the future of the business, Rodney hopes to begin operating his new machine shop and offering Department of Transportation inspections for trucks and trailers at the end of this month. He also hopes to get his ATV equipment fully available and possibly work with a few dealers to sell it.

Rodney is also always on the lookout for new companies to sublet work to his business.

Rodney is available at the shop most days from 5 a.m. until 5 p.m. but normal business hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. However, he is more than willing to stay after if there is a job order that needs to be finished.

During the fall and spring, Rodney works weekends to make himself available to the farmers so if something breaks down they can get it fixed and continue their work.

For more information about Burns Welding and Repair, call 218-964-5444 or visit the Web site www.burnswelding.net.



Burns Welding will be offering services through the new machine shop at the end of the month.



Rodney Burns bends a 14-gauge steel tube that is used to make hay rings and cattle feeders.



A new line of ATV equipment is available for sale or rent from Burns Welding of Thief River Falls.



All cattle equipment offered through Burns Welding is "Ben approved". This is Ben, the Burns family pet bull.

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 **Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

One of the Minnkota Power Systems



Pictured are many of the members that attended Red Lake Electric Cooperative's informational meeting held Feb. 1 at Ekelund Lutheran Church, rural Goodridge.



Edgar Miller, Goodridge, won an extension cord at the RLEC informational meeting held at Ekelund Lutheran Church.



Dale Anderson, Goodridge, was the winner of an electric knife at the RLEC informational meeting held Feb. 1.



Pictured are some of the members who attended Red Lake Electric Cooperative's District 9 meeting held Feb. 2 at Black River Lutheran Church, rural Red Lake Falls.



Serving as chairperson at the RLEC District 9 business meeting was Russ Coenen of Red Lake Falls. The meeting was held Feb. 2.



Prize winners at the RLEC District 9 meeting were Jan and Ted Curfman of Thief River Falls. The meeting was held at Black River Lutheran Church.



Jan Osborne, Thief River Falls, won a flashlight at the District 9 meeting held Feb. 2 at Black River Lutheran Church.



Roger Schmitz, Newfolden, served as the chairperson at Red Lake Electric Cooperative's District 3 meeting held Feb. 8 at the Newfolden Community Center.



Betty Hjelle, Newfolden, was the winner of a digital alarm clock at the RLEC District 3 meeting held Feb. 8.



Carol Kukowski, Newfolden, won a cutting board at the RLEC District 3 meeting held at the Newfolden Community Center.



Lois Remick, Red Lake Falls, served as chairperson at Red Lake Electric Cooperative's District 6 meeting held Feb. 9 at the Red Lake Falls Community Hall.



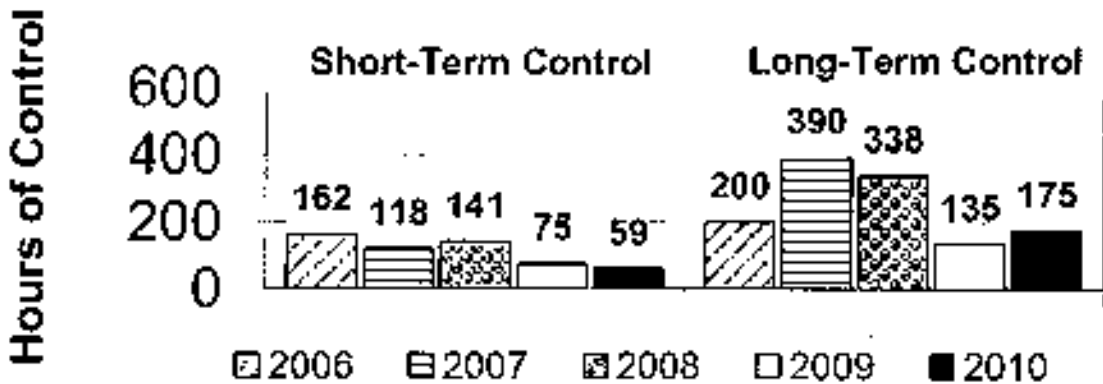
Glenyce Eskeli, Plummer, won a digital alarm clock at the RLEC District 6 meeting held Feb. 9.

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. Even with an increase in systemwide demand for energy, control times have been less this year and last because of renewable (Wind) generation added to Minnkota Power Cooperative's resources. In 2009, generation added at the Ashtabula, ND wind farm increased Minnkota Power Cooperative's Wind Energy resources to 358 Megawatts (MW). The Langdon and Ashtabula Wind Farms are the largest addition to Minnkota's energy sources since the Coyote coal-fired power plant came on line in 1981.

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Moving power

As power lines weave throughout the Red Lake Electric service territory, members are tied into a complex network that is essential to providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

At a time when renewable energy generation and energy efficiency are priorities, the success of each is dependent upon a well-maintained transmission system.

However, the complicated aspect of producing near continuous electric service is that electricity must be used, or moved to where it can be used, immediately after it's produced. It cannot be stored like water or gas. This means that transmission must be carefully monitored, utilizing an intricate system to move it 24 hours a day, notes the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, which oversees reliability of the electric transmission grid covering the United States.

"The national electric transmission grid has been described as the largest machine ever built," said Wally Lang, Minnkota Power Cooperative vice president - transmission. "Generators in North Dakota are running in synchronism with the generators in Miami, Fla. That's pretty amazing when you think about it. Across an entire continent, all of these generators are connected together through transmission lines. And trying to keep it in balance is no small task."

Electric cooperatives own and maintain roughly 65,000 miles, or 6 percent, of the nation's transmission lines and 2.5 million miles, or 42 percent, of its distribution lines, according to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Minnkota Power Cooperative, our wholesale power supplier, owns and maintains 3,062 miles of transmission line, ranging from 41,600 volts to 345,000 volts.

At the Speed of Light

Electricity moves at the speed of light along the path of least resistance, a basic principle that reflects the need for a carefully monitored, intricate system for moving electricity 24 hours a day. Scott Gates



delivered to substations in the Minnkota service area. The electricity is then sold to Red Lake Electric, where it is distributed on our own lines to member-owners.

Improvements Needed

The electric transmission grid has evolved and expanded during the last century. As more renewable energy projects such as wind farms come on line, it's clear not only that the transmission grid is being asked to do more than originally thought, but also that investments are necessary to improve our transmission system.

"There are ways to optimize transmitting power across systems over long distances on existing lines," Lang said. "However, at some point you're going to have to make investments in bulk transmission to get these increased power flows."

Federal climate change policy is reliant upon the ability to improve the transmission system. Various forms of renewable energy, including wind, suffer from the limitation of being produced in an area that isn't very populated. For remote renewable facilities to be as beneficial as possible, transmission lines also must be built to benefit the growing need for energy.

"Lots of improvements have been made to enable us to transmit a lot more power than anybody could have ever visualized," Lang said. "It's these enhancements in control and protection schemes that have enabled a lot more renewable energy to be absorbed than anybody could have envisioned."

Increasing transmission efficiency to better use and move electricity can potentially reduce the need for more generation and related transmission in the near future.

"Our power system, like a high-performance car, is only as good as its transmission," Lang said. "In other words, you can have a big engine under the hood, but if you don't have a good transmission to get the power to the wheels, you're not going to get very far."



It may seem like common sense, but always turn off the circuit breaker or remove the fuse before working on or replacing electrical equipment at home.



Be careful not to install new lighting to old, inferior wires. To avoid this fire hazard, check your wire rating first and either upgrade it or buy fixtures within the supply connection range.

Be careful when tackling home wiring projects

If spring sends you into remodeling mode, consider checking with professionals before you migrate to the nearest hardware store. While do-it-yourself (DIY) projects can be very satisfying to complete, they pose risks when it comes to electricity.

"Mistakes can be costly-or even deadly," warned John Drenenberg, consumer affairs manager for Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., (UL), a Chicago, Ill.-based not-for-profit firm that tests and sets minimum standards for electric-consuming items. "The first and best safety tip is to call in an expert rather than be your own electrician."

An ongoing study by the Quincy, Mass.-based Fire Protection Research Foundation has given UL engineers a better understanding of typical DIY wiring mistakes.

The most common mistakes are as follows:

1. Working with a live wire.

It may seem perfectly obvious, but thousands of DIYers receive electric shock injuries each year. To avoid becoming a statistic, always turn off the circuit breaker or remove the fuse before working on or replacing electrical equipment. If you have a pre-1940s home, be mindful that you probably have more than one breaker box, or panel board, as electricians call them.

2. Using the wrong lightbulb.

Most lighting fixtures feature a sticker on the socket that tells you the proper type and maximum wattage of the lightbulb to use.

Installing a different type of bulb, or one with higher wattage, will not only make the room brighter, but could also damage the lights and cause a fire. Heat is usually the catalyst in this case; the higher the wattage, the hotter the bulb and the hotter the wire that goes to the lighting fixture.

3. Not being grounded.

For optimal safety, receptacles should be wired with the proper grounding and polarity. Generally, three-pronged outlets signify an effective ground path in the circuit. However, homes built before the mid-1960s probably don't have a grounding path and simply replacing the existing outlet with a three-pronged outlet won't give you one.

"You see instances of this in homes with older wiring," Drenenberg said. "It's no worse than if you plug your two-pronged device into a two-pronged outlet. But it does give the homeowner a false sense of security."

Wiring with a grounding path usually sports a copper grounding wire with the cable.

If you are uncertain about whether your home's wiring is grounded, inexpensive UL-listed outlet circuit testers are available to check for proper grounding and polarity. If your outlet is improperly grounded, call an electrician before moving forward in any project.

4. Splicing, splicing, splicing.

Always make sure your wiring size and type match. Splicing wires by simply twisting them together

and covering them with electrical tape is rarely a good idea. Instead, use wiring suitable to your home's wiring and place wiring connections in metal or plastic boxes to decrease fire risk.

Also keep in mind that circuits protected by 15-amp fuses or breakers should be wired with No. 14 AWG copper wire minimum. For 20 amps, use No. 12 AWG minimum size copper wire. Other guidelines apply, so if you expect to do any splicing, seek professional help before you begin.

5. Hooking new lights to old wires.

Most light fixtures are marked with instructions for supply connections, such as "Use wire rated for at least 90C", which refers to the maximum temperature, 90 degrees Celsius or about 200 degrees Fahrenheit-under, which a wire's insulation can safely be used. Again, if you have an older home, pre-1984 in this case, wiring may have a lower temperature rating than a new luminaire.

"This isn't something most DIYers even think to consider," Drenenberg cautioned. "It probably won't burst into flame immediately, but it does increase the risk of a fire."

To avoid that risk, check your wire rating first and either upgrade it or buy fixtures within the supply connection range.

Article courtesy of Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.

Sesquicentennial and Century Farm applications due April 1

Minnesota Farm Bureau's Sesquicentennial and Century Farm programs will honor Minnesota families who have owned their farms for at least 150 or 100 years, respectively.

Sesquicentennial Farms

Since the Sesquicentennial Farm program began in 2008, over 115 farms have been recognized. The Sesquicentennial Farm program recognizes family farms according to the following qualifications:

- The farm must be at least 150 years old this year according to the abstract of title, land patent, original deed, county land records, court file in registration proceedings or other authentic land records. Do not send originals or copies of records.
- Your family must have owned the farm for 150 years or more. Family is defined as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, first cousins and direct in-laws (father, mother, brother, sister, daughter, son).
- Continuous residence on farm

is not required, but ownership must be continuous.

- The farm should consist of 50 or more acres and currently be involved in agricultural production.

A commemorative certificate signed by the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation President Kevin Paap, Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Gene Hugoson and Governor Tim Pawlenty will be awarded to qualifying families, along with an outdoor sign signifying Sesquicentennial Farm recognition.

Applications are available by writing Sesquicentennial Farms, Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation, P.O. Box 64370, St. Paul, MN 55164; emailing info@fbmn.org; or calling 651-768-2100. Applications are also at www.fbmn.org.

Century Farm

Minnesota families who have owned their farms for 100 years or more are encouraged to apply for the Century Farm program. More than 8,800 farms have been hon-

ored since the program's inception in 1976.

Family farms are recognized as Century Farms when they meet three qualifications. The farm must be: at least 100 years old according to authentic land records; in continuous family ownership for at least 100 years (continuous residence on the farm is not required); and at least 50 acres.

A commemorative certificate signed by State Fair President Dennis Baker, Paap and Pawlenty will be awarded to qualifying families, along with an outdoor sign signifying Century Farm recognition.

Applications are available online at www.mnstatefair.org by clicking the recognition programs link at the bottom of the home page, at www.fbmn.org, by calling the State Fair at 651-288-4481, or at statewide county extension and county Farm Bureau offices.

Information on all Sesquicentennial and Century Farm families will be available at the Minnesota Farm Bureau exhibit during the State Fair, Aug. 26 through Labor Day, Sept. 6 and at www.fbmn.org.

Deadline for application to either program is April 1. Previously recognized families should not reapply. Recipients will be announced at the beginning of June.

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| F8 LXR, Orange | \$7,899 |
| F8 S/P Orange, Black | \$7,999 |
| F1000, Green | \$8,849 |
| F1000, S/P, Black | \$9,449 |
| TZ1 2up, 4 stroke | \$8,299 |
| T500 2up | \$6,999 |
| 2009's | |
| F5 LXR, Green | \$6,999 |
| F8 LXR, Green | \$8,699 |
| F8, Green | \$8,199 |
| C/FR8, Orange & Black | \$7,800 |
| C/FR1000, Orange | \$9,399 |
| 2010's | |
| F570, Green | C/F 8 S/P White/Org |
| F5 LXR, Green | Z1 4 Stroke, Green |
| 500 S/P, Green | Z1 Turbo EXT Green |
| C/F R8HO, Green | F8 Green |
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| F8 S/P, Green | |

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Educators are encouraged to apply for the 25th annual lignite education seminar

Once again, the Lignite Energy Council is offering its popular Teacher Education Seminar to elementary, middle and high school teachers in North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota and Montana.

The 2010 Lignite Teacher Education Seminar, "Energy, Economics and Environment" to be held June 14 through 17 at Bismarck State College, will offer two graduate credits and four days of instruction, hands-on activities and facility tours.

"Educators are encouraged to register early because space is limited and the seminar fills up quickly," said Renee Walz, Lignite Energy Council director of member services and education. "Each year the seminar includes a variety of speakers and different tours. We encourage teachers who have taken the seminar several years ago to consider taking it again if a refresher is needed."

Last year, the seminar expanded to four days, which provides more time for additional topics and teachers have the opportunity to receive two graduate credits. Economics of the industry, job creation, the need for more workers, energy conservation and transmission are all topics that are becoming more important to our state and the surrounding region.

On the third day of the seminar, attendees will tour a lignite mine, a power plant fueled by lignite and the Great Plains Synfuels Plant. In addition, teachers tour the visitor's center at Fort Mandan, near Washburn, N.D., where the Lewis and Clark Expedition spent its first winter. The visitor's center was constructed with the use of coal combustion byproducts.

Teachers from all grade levels are encouraged to apply to the program. Application materials will be sent to teachers and schools throughout the region and applications are to be returned by April 15.

Teachers who attend the seminar and complete a lesson plan can choose one of three North Dakota universities to receive their graduate credits from: University of North Dakota, North Dakota State University and Minot State University. The Lignite Energy Council is providing sponsorships for North Dakota teachers and out-of-state teachers are eligible to receive scholarships from sponsoring utilities.

The Lignite Energy Council is a trade association that represents more than 350 companies that are involved in the region's energy industry. Each year, about 30 million tons of lignite are produced in North Dakota and converted to electricity, synthetic natural gas, fertilizer and other products. The industry supports about 28,000 employees in North Dakota and is responsible for about \$3 billion in economic activity in the state.

More information is available by visiting <http://lignite.com/teachers>.

are eligible for two new practices, drainage water management and seasonal high tunnels for crops.

Drainage water management facilitates the management and control of existing tile drainage systems to improve the water quality leaving the system. Seasonal high tunnels, sometimes referred to as hoop houses, are limited as a pilot practice to determine if such structures can provide environmental benefits with increased production.

Participation in EQIP is limited to agricultural producers. Organic producers, limited resource farmers, beginning farmers and underserved farmers were designated in the Farm Bill as focused outreach groups and may benefit from EQIP.

To find out more about EQIP, visit www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov.

EQIP funds available

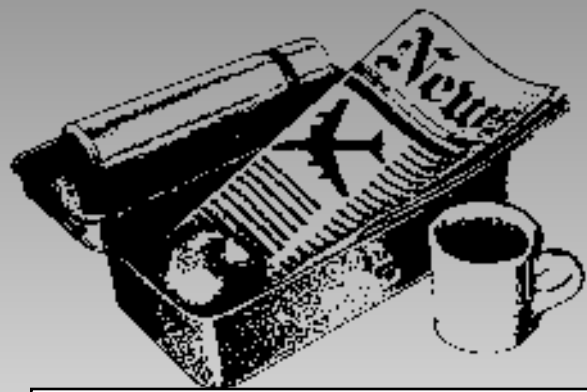
Agricultural producers looking to solve natural resource problems on their farms should apply now for assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

NRCS announced that a scoring period to determine priority for funding applications will occur at the end of February. Nearly \$22 million is available.

Completed applications must be received at local NRCS Field Offices by Feb. 26 in order to be considered for this scoring period.

Through EQIP, landowners interested in conservation practices are provided both technical assistance and financial assistance to install eligible practices.

For 2010, Minnesota producers



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Gazette Community Cookbook

Red Lake County residents and former residents can submit recipes in categories such as appetizers and beverages; breakfast; breads and rolls; soups, salads and sandwiches; meats and main dishes; vegetables and side dishes; camping; cakes, pies and desserts; cookies, bars and candies; this and that; and canning.

All recipes are due into the Gazette by March 31.

Recipes can be dropped off at the office, mailed to PO Box 370, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750 or emailed to rlfgaz@gvtel.com. Recipes will not be returned.

The community cookbook will become available for purchase at a later date.

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Red Lake Electric Cooperative

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Mail or bring your ads to the RLEC office by the tenth of the month. Commercial ads are 10¢ per word with a minimum charge of \$4 per insertion.

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Your Name, Address and Phone Number. Mail with your power bill payment, if you prefer, or fax to 218-253-2630.

VOTING DELEGATE CERTIFICATION

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

The _____ has, at an official

Name of Member

meeting, designated _____

Name of Delegate

to represent us at the 2010 annual meeting of the Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Attest _____

Chairman or President

Attest _____

Clerk or Secretary

Director nominations, petitions due March 1

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 31 have elected director candidates at the recently held district meetings.

The names of the candidates are Colette Kujava, Newfolden, District 3; Randy Versdahl, Red Lake Falls, District 6; and Peter Mosbeck, Red Lake Falls, District 9.

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. March 1.

At least 15 members of the district must sign the petition for the director nominee. The nominee's name will then be placed on the election ballot at the annual meeting March 31 at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls.

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

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

RLEC director qualifications required to be elected/serve

- No member shall be eligible to become or remain a director who:
- Is not a member of the Cooperative, receiving electric service at the member's primary residence in the district from which the director is elected.
 - Within three years preceding a director candidate's nomination was an employee of the Cooperative.
 - Is or becomes, or at any time during the three (3) years preceding a director candidate's nomination shall have been employed by a labor union, which represents, or has represented, or has endeavored to represent any employees of the Cooperative.
 - Is a parent, spouse or cohabitant of any employee of the Cooperative.
 - Is a person who is a parent, spouse or cohabitant of an incumbent director who is not up for 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.

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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.

1

1 block (100 kilowatt-hours per month), \$0.30/mo.

2

2 blocks (200 kilowatt-hours per month), \$0.60/mo.

3

3 blocks (300 kilowatt-hours per month), \$0.90/mo.

4

4 blocks (400 kilowatt-hours per month), \$1.20/mo.

5

5 blocks (500 kilowatt-hours per month), \$1.50/mo.

Other

Please specify the total number of 100 kilowatt-hour *Infinity Wind Energy* 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 _____

Home phone _____

Cell phone _____

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.

AUTO PAY OFFERED BY RLEC

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

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.

RLEC ELECTRIC ACCOUNT # _____

NAME (PRINT) _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE # _____

NAME OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTION _____

CHECKING ACCOUNT # _____

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