



# Volts and Jolts

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

*One of the Minnkota Power Systems*

SERVING THE FOUR-COUNTY AREA OF MARSHALL, PENNINGTON, RED LAKE AND POLK

VOL. 44 – NO. 03

RED LAKE FALLS (RED LAKE COUNTY), MINNESOTA 56750

JANUARY 2009

## Member Meetings

### Opportunity for information, discussion, fellowship

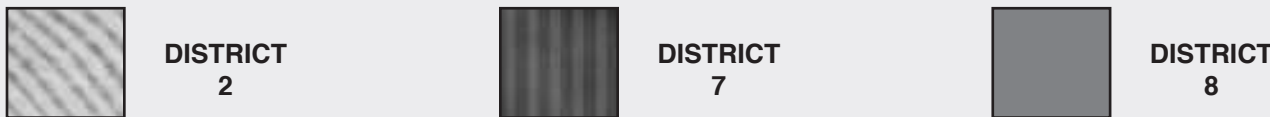
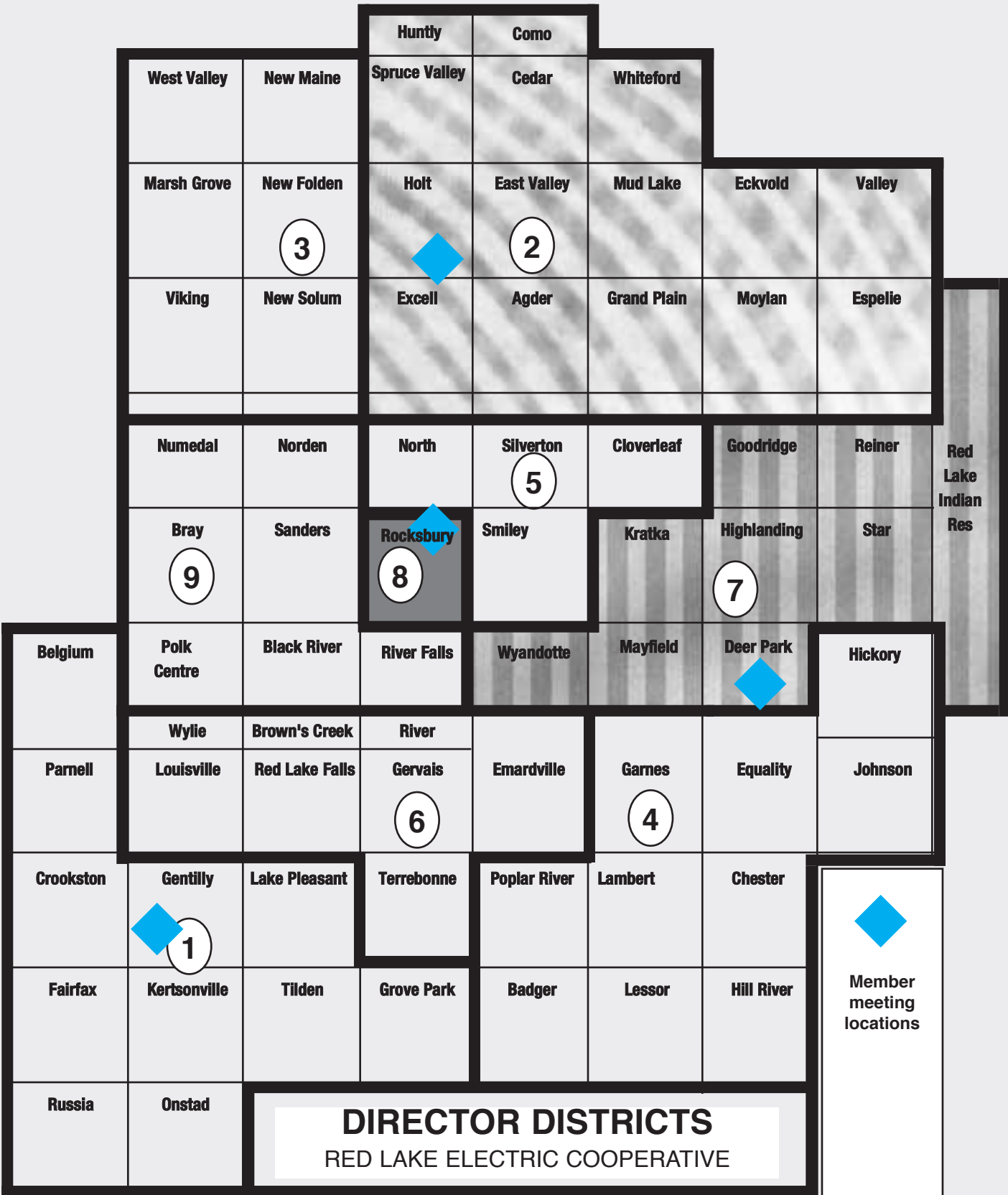
Meetings for the members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative will be held at four locations within the Cooperative's service territory. Meetings will be held within Districts 2, 7 and 8 and an informational meeting will be held in Gentilly.

The meetings are held to inform attendees on current issues and programs associated with the Cooperative. Official business will be conducted at the three district meetings, which will include the election of a director candidate.

Even though a meeting may not be scheduled within the district in which you reside, you are welcome to attend a meeting of your choice. Anyone requiring special access or assistance at any one of the meeting sites should call Red Lake Electric in advance so arrangements can be made. Door prizes will be awarded and lunch will be served at each meeting.

### 2009 Member Meeting Schedule

Day, Date, Time	Meeting	Location
Tuesday, Jan. 27, 1:30 p.m.	District 2	Nazareth Lutheran Church, Holt
Thursday, Jan. 29, 7:00 p.m.	Informational	St. Peter's Catholic Church, Gentilly
Monday, Feb. 2, 7:00 p.m.	District 7	Oak Park Lutheran Church, Rural Oklee
Thursday, Feb. 5, 7:00 p.m.	District 8	St. John's Lutheran School, Rural Thief River Falls

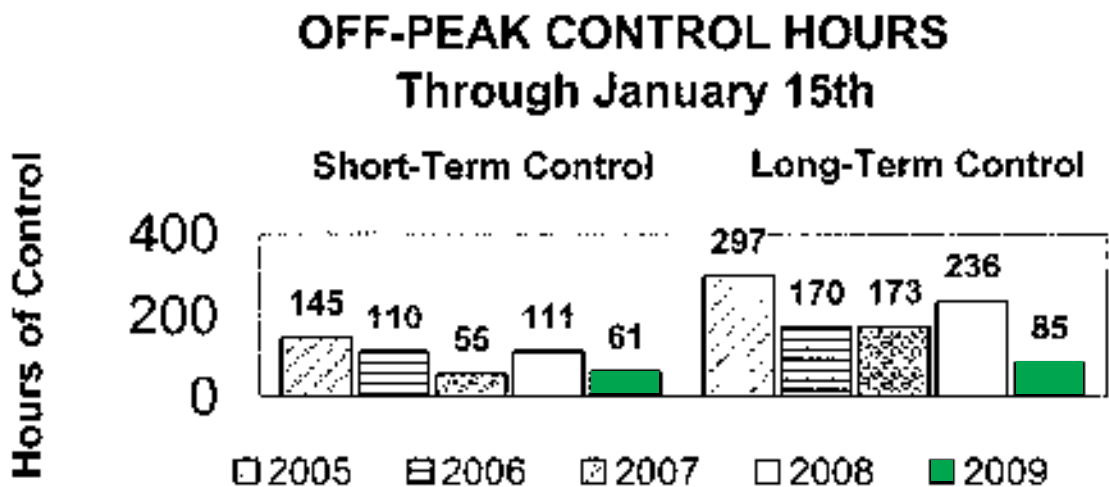


### MEMBER MEETING DISTRICTS

### 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.



## Winter storm safety

By Chris Grammes

Snow and ice storms are an inevitable part of the winter season. However, they can lead to downed power lines and outages. Remember the following tips to stay safe and warm should you find yourself in the dark after a severe winter event:

- Never touch a fallen power line and assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged. Call your electric co-op at 218-253-2168 to report it immediately. Avoid contact with overhead lines during cleanup and other activities.
- In the event of an outage, an alternate heating source, such as a fireplace, propane space heater or wood stove, may be used. Extreme caution should be taken.
- Plan to stay in an area of the home where the alternate heat source is located.
- Fuel- and wood-burning heating sources should be vented. Be sure to follow manufacturer's directions.
- Make sure carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors are working properly.
- Do not use a gas-powered oven for heating. A gas oven may go out or burn inefficiently, leading to carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Do not use a gas or charcoal grill inside the home. Do not use



charcoal briquettes in the fireplace.

- If you use a portable generator to power a heating source, be sure the (4728003.01 Sherman T. Groven) generator is located outside your house for proper ventilation. Do not use a generator in an attached garage. Follow manufacturer's directions for operating the generator.
- Take special care not to overload a generator. Use appropriately sized extension cords to carry the electric load. Make sure the cords have a grounded, three-pronged plug and are in good condition.
- Never run cords under rugs or carpets.
- Never connect generators to power lines. The reverse flow of

electricity can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

Ideally, your family will stay warm until the power comes back on. But keep an eye on family members for signs of hypothermia, which include shivering, drowsiness and mental and physical slowness. The elderly and young children are particularly vulnerable to hypothermia. Call 911 immediately if you notice these symptoms. At least one telephone in the house that does not depend on electricity should be available in the case of a power outage.

Sources: Consumer Product Safety Commission; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Ag Safety Database.





# Manager's Comments

by Roger Johanneck

## 2009 budget

Your Red Lake Electric Board of Directors met Dec. 31 and approved the Cooperative's operating and Capital expenditure budgets for 2009. The annual budget provides a guide for us to carry out the business of the Cooperative for the coming year.

Mention the word budget and the tendency for many has us bracing for bad news; who can fault a response like that? We hear and read so much about budgets in the news these days and it is usually not in a pleasant way: balancing the budget, budget deficit, budget cuts, over budget, a car was stuck so deep in the snow they couldn't budge it. Ok, that last one doesn't count, but you get the idea. You hear or read the word budget lately and it is often accompanied with more proof that our economy is struggling right now.

For as long as I can remember, an annual budget, financial map, plan or whatever you prefer to call it, has been one of our annual tasks here at Red Lake Electric Cooperative. In it's simplest form, our budget consists of trying to estimate what our expenses are going to be and making sure we'll have enough revenue to cover those expenses.

Trying to determine what is in store for us in the coming year is never an easy task or an exact science. Preparing a budget requires asking lots of questions and trying to find answers. We know before the ink dries on the budget report that the numbers we put together

won't be perfect, but hopefully close enough so that we are prepared for the events encountered in 2009.

In our part of the country, weather plays a big role in determining how much energy customers will need to keep warm in winter and cool in summer. How about rain during harvest? Having a wet or late (2702002.02 David Ness) harvest has a big impact on crop drying; we need look no further than our most recent harvest to see the impact of what a wet fall with lots of grain to dry does to the demand for energy.

Besides weather, the price of competing fuels such as heating oil and propane also influence the amount of electric energy our customers use. When heating fuel oil rose to near \$4 per gallon this last year, folks who hadn't yet converted to an electric off-peak heating system were quick to do so. What about plug-in space heaters? How many customers will use these portable heaters as a magic formula to cut heating costs or in place of the non-electric heat source intended during peak control times? Lets hope we have learned our lesson on plug-in space heaters.

In addition to planning for revenue and expenses, our budget also includes a plan for construction activities and maintenance work. Trimming trees near our power lines, systematic pole testing and replacement of poles that don't pass the test, are also on our list of bud-

geted activities each year. Also included in planned construction projects are new tie lines to increase service reliability to customers, line upgrades to handle the increase in system load and replacement of faulty underground cable. These along with construction for new services make up most of the capital expenditures we plan for in 2009.

Hopefully you can tell from what I have shared with you here, there is wide scope of numbers and activities included in our annual budget report. The process for putting a budget together, the plan for what we think will happen is based on a combination of historical trends, work plans we have in place and changes we know will be forthcoming in 2009. It is our intention that this budget and our effort to carry this plan out will keep us on course to remain financially strong so that we can continue to be a source of reliable, competitively priced energy for you in 2009 and beyond.

### Customer Meetings

It is that time of year again, when the Cooperative holds it's District and informational meetings throughout our service area. I encourage you to check out the meeting schedule included in this month's issue of the Volts and Jolts and welcome customers to join us for one of the meetings located in your area. Our meeting format will be similar to previous years where we (4403023.06 Lynae Johnson) will provide information that we think you will find interesting and helpful, give you a chance to ask questions and visit with RLEC staff and neighbors over pie and coffee. Hope to see you there.

## Thank you

Thank you to the following members and friends for their hospitality:  
Bob Homme, Stella and Brad Blawat, Dan and Mary Thorstad and Dave and Judy Lundeen.



# Electrical Operations

by Bob Guillemette

## Underground cable replacements

Keeping the lights on is one of the highest priorities of the line department and, for that matter, of the whole organization. For that reason and others we have tried to take a pro-active approach when dealing with underground cable failures. Red Lake Electric has about 2,500 miles of line and 250 of those miles are underground. Starting in the late 1980's we started experiencing outages due to underground cable and cable component failures. After repeated outages on the same line, it became apparent that for all concerned it would be better to replace the cable, either with overhead or underground line.

During the 15 years or so following the first outages we concentrated our efforts on replacing cable that was installed in the mid 1970's. Because of the higher costs with underground we tried and were able to (1111003.01 Steven Corcoran) replace most of that vintage cable with overhead lines. In areas where overhead line was not feasible, a newer and more reliable type of underground cable was installed. After the main lines were replaced the small sections of line were next on the agenda and those were replaced also. The next vintage of cable we are looking at was

installed in the late 1970's and early 1980's and it had a newer type of insulation called cross linked polyethylene or XLP.

The 1980's cable has been more reliable than it's predecessor, but it has an inherent flaw: corrosion of the neutral conductors. This cable also came with a ridge to hold the neutrals (5529004.02 Ross J. Cota) in place, but the neutral seems to corrode at a higher rate where it exits the ridges. When the cable loses it's neutral, it becomes more susceptible to failure and it could become a safety issue if someone would happen to dig into it. Rectifiers were installed along this cable to stop the corrosion and they have worked for the most part.

In the past couple of years there have been a few failures on XLP cable and in one case there were three failures on the same line in 2008. For this reason, we are concentrating our efforts on this section of line and hope to have it replaced in 2009. This is a five-mile section in the northern part of New Solum and Viking Townships. According to our work plan that was developed in 2005, the cost to replace this cable would be \$53,000 per mile or a total cost of \$265,000. If the same line could be put in over-

head, the total cost would be \$170,000 and the net savings would be \$95,000. I know the costs have gone up during the past three years and underground has increased substantially more than overhead so the savings could be even more. There are over fifty miles of XLP cable left in our system and if we could save \$19,000 per mile as the cable is being replaced, it would amount to a total savings of over \$1,000,000.

We are still in the process of trying to obtain overhead easements for the New Solum project and progress has been slow. On the mile that we have all of the easements the line has been staked, but we need to know what the outcome is further down the line before we can continue. If we are able to obtain easements for overhead line the project can start almost immediately. If not, then we can work on that part of the line, but the underground portions will have to wait until the ground is thawed. In any case, we are now in a position where there could be an extended outage if the cable should fail this winter. Hopefully that will not happen and the new line will be constructed before the next cable failure on that line.

# 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



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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 \$15 to \$21 month  
First 500 KWH ..... 8.0¢ 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.

# Annual Meeting March 25

Red Lake Electric Cooperative members are encouraged to mark their calendars for the Cooperative's annual meeting. The meeting will be called at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 25, at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls.



## 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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## OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT ..... Kelly Lundeen  
VICE PRESIDENT ..... Bonnie Christians  
SECRETARY-TREASURER ..... Henry Wieland  
DIRECTORS ..... Robert Olson,  
Robert Finstad, Steven Linder, Joyce Johnson,  
Mark Hanson, Peter Mosbeck

Subscription Rate ..... \$2.50 per year

# 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

**Romano Shrimp-Stuffed Mushrooms**  
20 large, fresh mushrooms  
5 oz. small cooked shrimp, rinsed, drained and chopped  
1 carton soft cream cheese with chives  
1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce  
Dash of garlic powder  
2 to 3 drops of hot sauce  
1/4 c. grated Romano cheese  
Clean mushrooms with damp paper towels. Remove stems and reserve for later use. Set caps aside.  
Combine all remaining ingredients, except Romano cheese. Mix well. Spoon mixture into mushroom caps and sprinkle with cheese.  
Place mushrooms in a lightly greased 11 by 7 by 2-inch baking pan. Cover and chill 2 to 3 hours.  
Uncover and bake at 400 degrees for 14 minues. Makes 20 appetizers.

**Creamy Potato Soup**  
4 to 5 large potatoes  
2 quarts water  
1 tsp. salt  
1/4 c. butter or margarine  
2 tbsp. flour  
1/4 c. water  
1 c. half-and-half  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 c. shredded cheddar cheese, if desired  
Peel and chop potatoes. Place in a large soup pot with water and 1 tsp. salt. Bring to boil, lower heat to medium-low and cook until potatoes are soft. Add butter.  
In a small bowl, mix flour with 1/4 c. water until smooth, add to potatoes and stir until slightly thickened. Add half-and-half; heat through. Salt and pepper to taste. If desired, sprinkle cheese on top of each serving. Serves six.

**Red Velvet Cake**  
1/2 c. shortening  
1 1/2 c. sugar  
2 eggs  
2 oz. red cake coloring or 1 small bottle  
1 tbsp. cocoa  
2 1/2 c. plain flour  
1 tsp. salt

1 c. buttermilk  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1 tbsp. vinegar  
In a large mixing bowl, cream shortening with an electric mixer; add sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition.  
Add cake coloring and cocoa.  
In a medium bowl, sift flour and salt together; add to shortening and sugar mixture, alternating with buttermilk. Fold in soda and vinegar.  
Pour into 3 greased and floured 9-inch cake pans.  
Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes. Cool layers and frost with cream cheese frosting. Serves 10 to 12.

**Mocha Chocolate Chip Banana Muffins**  
1 c. butter or margarine  
1 1/4 c. sugar  
1 egg  
3 ripe bananas  
1 tbsp. instant coffee, dissolved in 1 tbsp. water  
1 tsp. vanilla  
2 1/4 c. all-purpose flour  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1 c. semi-sweet chocolate chips  
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Blend butter or margarine, sugar, egg, bananas, coffee and vanilla in a food processor for 2 minutes.  
Add flour, salt, baking powder and baking soda. Blend until flour disappears. Add chocolate chips and mix in with a wooden spoon.  
Spoon mixture into paper-lined muffin cups. Bake for 25 minutes. Cool on a wire rack. Makes 12 to 18 muffins.

**Homemade Chicken Noodle Soup**  
2 14-oz. cans chicken broth  
2 c. water  
3 carrots, chopped  
2 ribs celery, chopped  
Dash of pepper  
3 slices fresh ginger root



**Snow and speed produce danger**  
Everyone needs to know these important snowmobile safety tips:  
• **Avoid power poles, guy wires and underground transformer boxes.**  
• **Use caution in ditches. Heavy snowfalls can bury transformer boxes and cabinets.**  
• **Guy lines can seem invisible when going fast on a snowmobile.**  
• **If you see a downed power line, always assume the line is energized, even if it is lying on the ground. Stay away and call 911 immediately.**



**Mickelson Eye Clinic, P.A.**  
*Craig R. Mickelson, O.D.*  
MeritCare Northwest Medical Center  
126 LaBree Ave. S., PO Box 521  
Thief River Falls, MN 56701-0521

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8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.  
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BP7000



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New 657

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TM140 NH loader .....	\$49,000.00
TW 35 Ford MFD duals Clean .....	\$29,000.00
TW20 2WD .....	\$16,500.00
936 20.8x38 8000hrs .....	\$28,000.00
1982 895 20.8x38 tires .....	\$22,000.00
TG230 MFD supersteer .....	\$86,000.00
8340 Ford MFD / loader / cab .....	\$38,000.00
5230 CIH MFD loader .....	\$33,500.00
5250 CIH MFD .....	\$39,000.00
5088 IHC 2wd .....	\$18,000.00
8050 Allis 2wd.....	\$14,900.00
TL 100 A MFD.....	\$42,000.00
TN65 NH .....	CALL
TN60A 540hrs Loader MFD .....	\$28,000.00
7700 with cab .....	\$10,500.00
4010 JD diesel .....	\$7,800.00
4520 JD with loader .....	
TC30 hydro loader sims cab and heat.....	\$18,000.00
DX55 Case MFD loader .....	\$25,950.00
TC55DA MFD canopy clean.....	\$22,000.00
TC40DA MFD loader .....	\$19,500.00
TC33D loader MFD .....	\$16,000.00
399 Massey MFD / loader .....	\$20,500.00
966 IH CAB pto no/ 3PT .....	\$6,700.00
TS100 2488hrs 8x2 trans .....	\$22,000.00

**TILLAGE**

Wil-Rich 657 disc chisel.....	CALL
4800 28' cultivator .....	\$7,200.00
4700 45' cultivator with harrow .....	\$5,000.00
630 JD tandem disc 28' .....	\$7,800.00
220 JD disc 20' .....	\$4,800.00
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RC100 ASV .....	\$38,000.00
250 JD bucket cab/heat .....	\$18,500.00
260 JD 2000 bucket 1765hrs .....	\$16,200.00
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L170 NH 2215 hrs no bucket .....	\$19,500.00
LS180 NH cab/heat.....	\$22,000.00
LS185B cab/heat .....	\$28,000.00
(1) L180 NH low hours clean.....	CALL
(1) L185 NH low hours clean.....	CALL
RC 60 cab/heat bucket clean .....	\$32,000.00
RC 30 1617hrs clean .....	\$16,500.00
(2) SR80 cab/heat/air .....	CALL

**MISC**

Terex backhoe cab/MFD 2005 model .....	\$42,950.00
Terex backhoe cab/MFD 2005 model.....	\$43,500.00
850K Dozer Case .....	\$63,000.00
LM860 NH Telehandler.....	\$42,000.00
CX 80 excavator.....	\$70,000.00
A-62 payloader.....	\$18,000.00
84' Marflex sprayer 750 gal.....	\$12,000.00
8600 CIH air drill .....	\$14,500.00
5100 Wil-Rich 30' air seeder .....	\$8,500.00
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BP7000 bale shredder .....	\$9,300.00

**HAY**

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(2) 605G Vermeer balers .....	CALL
BR780 baler .....	\$18,500.00
BR780 NH Baler net wrap /extra sweep .....	\$24,000.00
688 NH baler .....	\$13,500.00
8590 CIH square baler .....	\$25,000.00
567 JD round baler .....	\$24,000.00
855 NH baler .....	\$3,800.00
(4) 499 NH haybine .....	CALL
2245 Gehl 12' haybine.....	\$6,900.00
(3) 8312 Case discbine .....	CALL

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1 tbsp. vegetable oil  
1/2 c. chopped cooked chicken  
1/2 c. egg noodles  
In a large soup pot over medium heat, combine broth, water, carrots, celery and pepper. Simmer until carrots are tender.  
In the meantime, in a medium skillet over medium-high heat, combine the ginger, oil and chicken. Saute for 5 minutes and remove the sliced ginger. Add the chicken to the broth mixture and bring to boiling. Add noodles.  
Cook over medium heat for about 15 minutes or until noodles are tender. Makes four servings.

**Hashbrown and Potato Casserole**  
1/2 c. chopped onion  
1/2 c. butter or margarine  
1 32-oz. pkg. hash brown potatoes  
1 tsp. salt  
1 can cream of chicken soup  
2 c. sour cream  
1 c. shredded cheddar cheese  
1/4 c. margarine or butter, melted  
1 c. cracker crumbs  
In a medium skillet, cook onion in 1/2 cup butter on medium heat until transparent.  
Combine potatoes, onion, salt, soup, sour cream and cheese in a large mixing bowl. Stir well. Pour mixture into a greased 2 1/2-quart casserole dish.  
Combine 1/4 cup butter with cracker crumbs. Sprinkle over potato mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

## Protect your family from carbon monoxide poisoning

By Chris Grammes

Often called the "silent killer" because of its odorless, tasteless, and colorless nature, carbon monoxide remains the leading cause of accidental poisonings in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Each year, carbon monoxide poisoning claims nearly 500 lives and causes more than 15,000 visits to hospital emergency departments.  
Carbon monoxide can be found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by cars and trucks, small gasoline engines, stoves, lanterns, coal- and wood-burning stoves, and gas ranges and heating systems. Carbon monoxide from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces, poisoning people and animals who breathe it.  
Portable electric generators are a source of carbon monoxide poisoning if used improperly. Many people rely on these units during extended power outages, but special care must be used. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, for example, the misuse of generators caused five deaths and dozens of cases of carbon monoxide poisoning.  
The most common symptoms of



Photo source: First Alert

carbon monoxide poisoning are headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. High levels of carbon monoxide inhalation can lead to loss of consciousness and death. Unless suspected, poisoning can be difficult to diagnose because the symptoms mimic other illnesses like the flu.

To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning in your home, following these tips:

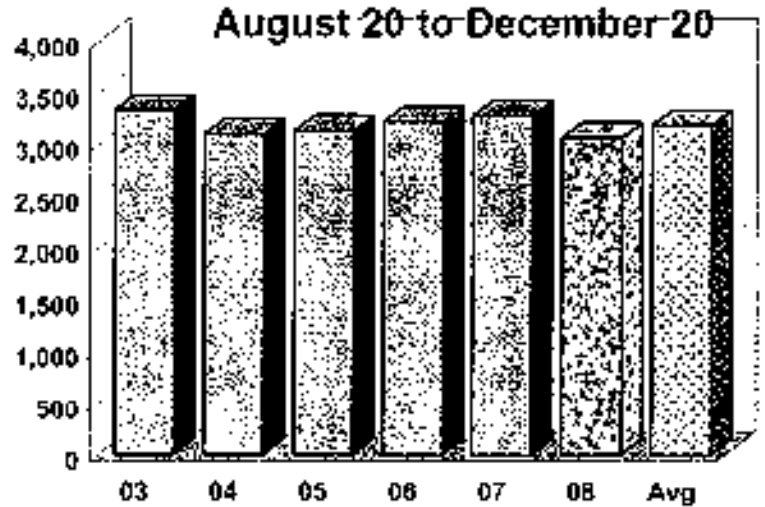
- Have your fuel-burning appliances - including oil and gas furnaces, gas water heaters, gas ranges and ovens, gas dryers, gas or kerosene space heaters, fireplaces, and wood stoves - inspected by a trained professional at the beginning of every heating season. Make certain that flues and chimneys are connected, in good condition, and not blocked.
- Choose appliances that vent fumes outside whenever possible, have them properly installed, and maintain them according to manufacturers' instructions.
- Read and follow all instructions that accompany any fuel-burning device. If you cannot avoid using an unvented gas or kerosene space heater, carefully follow the cautions that come with the device. Use the proper fuel and keep doors to the rest of the house open. Crack a window to ensure enough air for ventilation and proper fuel-burning.
- Do not idle your car in a closed garage. Fumes can build up very quickly.
- Never use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- Never use a charcoal grill indoors or charcoal briquettes in a fireplace.
- Do not sleep in any room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater.
- Do not use any gasoline-powered engines (mowers, weed trimmers, snow blowers, chainsaws, small engines, or generators) in enclosed spaces.
- Install a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector in your home and check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. Look for Underwriters' Laboratory (UL) certification on any detector you purchase.

If a carbon monoxide detector in your house goes off, check to see if anyone in the house is experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. If so, get them out of the house immediately and tell your doctor you suspect poisoning from the gas.

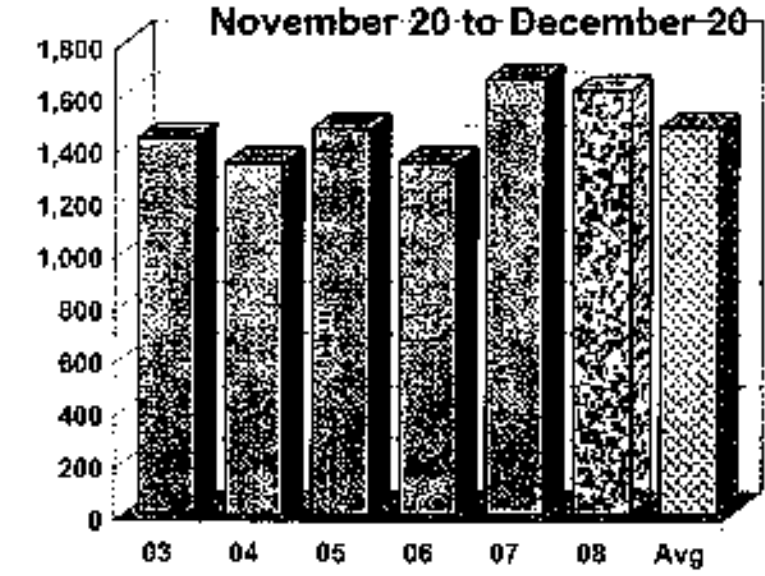
Regardless of whether anyone in the home has symptoms, ventilate the house, turn off all potential sources of carbon monoxide, and have a qualified technician check your gas appliances.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

## YEAR TO DATE DEGREE DAYS



## DEGREE DAYS





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VOLTS AND JOLTS FEATURE OF THE MONTH

Ernest Swanson has a history of dedication to community

**By Destiny Harmoning**

Ernest Swanson, 91, of Goodridge has a history of dedication to family, community organizations and Red Lake Electric Cooperative. As a member of the Lions and Masons, Swanson stays connected to his community. His relationship with Red Lake Electric goes back over 60 years.

Swanson was born in 1917 and still lives in the home he grew up in. He graduated from Goodridge High School in 1935.

The land Swanson lives on near Goodridge was homesteaded by his parents in 1905. In 1915, they built the house that Swanson now lives in. His parents also built a barn on the property. "I remember it very vividly," Swanson said of the barn being built.

When Swanson took over the family farm, he made a few changes. He added on a bedroom on one end and an utility room on another. He also built new cabinets for the kitchen.

Swanson married his wife Lois in 1939. She was still in high school when they met. Her family had moved nearby Swanson in 1936. Prior to that, Lois had lived in Kansas. The couple was married for over 60 years when Lois died Jan. 7, 2000.

The couple had five children, Alan, Lowell, Sharon, Anita and Linda. Alan lives on the same land as Swanson, in his own house across the driveway. He is a teacher at Northland Community and Technical College in Thief River Falls and he also farms the family quarter of land and another quarter west of there. He has 60 beef cattle. Lowell farms nearby the family land, about half a mile away. Sharon is a retired home agent and lives in Ada. Anita is a retired school teacher living in Lake Park. Linda works for one of the major hotels in Reno, Nevada.

Swanson also has 15 grandchild-

Ernest Swanson is a longtime member and chaplain of the Northern Lodge chapter of Masons.

dren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Even though he is 91 years old, Swanson stays very active in his community and at home. He lives alone, taking care of himself.

Swanson is an avid bowler, playing the sport two times a week in Thief River Falls. He bowls on Mondays with the seniors and bowls on Wednesdays in the Farmer Merchant League. "Gotta keep active," Swanson said of bowling. He even bought himself a

new ball recently.

Swanson has been bowling for 45 years. He bowled at the Oklee alley until it burned down. In the past, Swanson said he used to have an average of 165. His average now is 140. He has numerous bowling trophies in his home, one of which states his high game of 244.

Another past time of Swanson's is woodworking and carpentry. He built numerous things inside his home and on his land. Inside the

house he has built a television stand, a grandfather clock, cupboards and several other furniture-type pieces.

He also built a pole shed to store machinery and a quanset. Most recently, Swanson rebuilt an old shed on the property. The old one was torn down one year ago and he built a new one that looks just like the old one. The building stores four antique tractors, which Swanson enjoys collecting.

Swanson is a lifelong member of Faith Lutheran Church in Goodridge and he attends services there every Sunday.

Swanson served on the Goodridge School Board for 18 years.

Swanson is also very active in the Northern Lodge chapter of the Masons of Thief River Falls. In 1961, he was appointed Worshipful Master and has been the Chaplain of the Northern Lodge ever since.

Also in 1961, Swanson helped form the Goodridge Lions. He is still a member and is active in the organization. In 1975, he was elected District Governor of the Lions.

In 1985, Swanson was elected Grand High Priest of the Royal Arch Masons of Minnesota.

Another event in 1961 for Swanson was being appointed to Postmaster of Goodridge. At that time, Postmasters were a political appointment and Swanson was

appointed by John F. Kennedy. He still has the document with the former president's signature on it.

Swanson worked as Postmaster for 23 years. In 1965, he was elected state president of the Minnesota chapter of the National Association of Postmasters. He served the term for one year.

Swanson collected stamps from when he started as Postmaster up until now. He has a three-book col-

lection that is insured for \$5,000.

At that time, at the tail end of a war, it was difficult to hire help, so Swanson helped dig holes for the posts for the electricity. He also helped raise and set the poles. He did this on his farm, as well as neighboring farms. Swanson recalls being paid about 50 cents an hour to do the job.

Red Lake Electric took over after the poles were set, running the wires where they needed to go.

One of the many pieces of furniture Swanson has built.

Prior to becoming Postmaster, Swanson used to raise dairy cattle and farmed grain on the original Swanson farm. When he became Postmaster, he sold his cattle and his sons took over the farm. On the side of farming, Swanson used to do carpentry work. He built a few homes in his neighborhood.

Swanson retired from being

The farm was energized in early 1946. Danielson Electric of Thief River Falls charged Swanson \$400 to wire electricity to the entire home and farm. Most of that wiring is still used today.

Swanson received his first bill from Red Lake Electric Feb. 20, 1946. The bill was for 160 Kilowatt hours for \$8.

Swanson said electricity costs

Swanson enjoys collecting antique tractors, as well as stamps and bowling trophies.

Postmaster 24 years ago. Since then, he has just helped his sons with farming.

Swanson has a long history with Red Lake Electric Cooperative, dating back to 1944 when he signed the membership form, buying \$5 in stock.

more now. His most recent bill was for \$550, a big jump from his first bill of \$8. Sometimes the benefits outway the cost and in the case, Swanson agrees. He stated, "I'd sure hate to be without it."

This barn was built by Swanson's parents but it remains on his land today.

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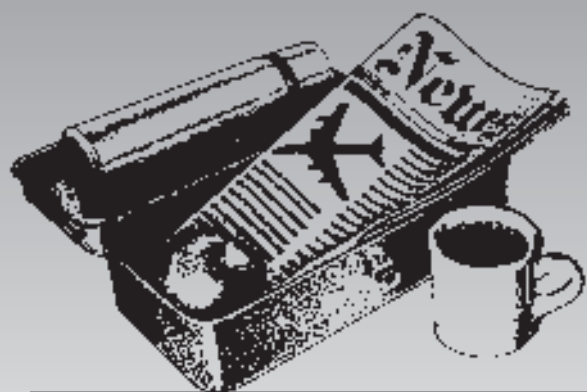
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