



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

SEPTEMBER 2008

Fine-tune energy use with the right television

Streamlining your home's energy use can make a big impact on monthly electric bills, especially with fuel costs rising. But the devil is in the details and everyday energy wasters are sometimes easy to overlook.

One ever-present culprit lurks in your home right now. When combined with DVD players and video game consoles, television use makes up about 10 percent of an average household's annual electricity bill, according to Energy Star®, a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy.

Depending on the technology behind the TV you're watching, your monthly related energy costs can vary dramatically. Standard sets use a cathode ray tube, with those smaller than 40 inches drawing roughly 75 Watts when on, which is close to what a 75-Watt incandescent light bulb uses. An average flat screen LCD television of the same size also requires 70 Watts, while a similar flat-screen plasma TV can really suck some power, consuming an average 246 Watts when on.

With more families opting for flat screen TVs these days, the choice between LCD and plasma can really make an impact to almost startling levels on a national scale.

Currently, there are more than 275 million TVs in use across the country, with the average household tuning in 4.7 hours a day. It takes more than 50 billion kilowatts a year to keep those sets on, according to EPA, meaning it costs Americans \$5.2 billion to watch all of that TV.

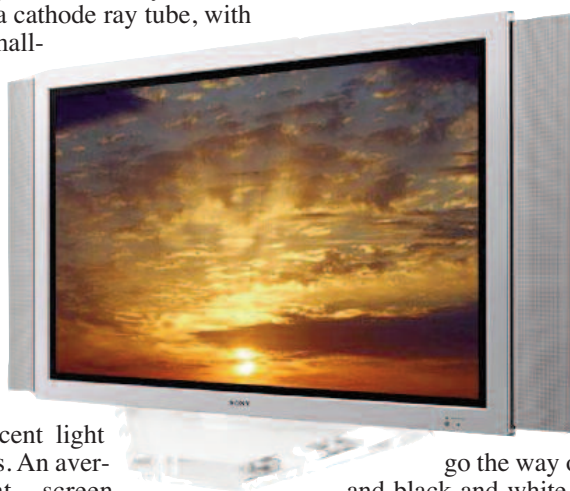
Of the total electricity generated in a single year, a full 1.2 percent goes toward keeping televisions glowing. And, if current buying trends continue, that number could climb to nearly 2 percent in a few years, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council, a New York City-based environmental advocacy group.

The good news is that energy-efficient TVs - LCD, plasma and otherwise - are becoming available. This November, blue labels will appear on all TVs that use less energy when turned on. Current Energy Star TV labels only indicate how efficient a set is when switched off, in standby mode.

"Energy Star's new specifications for televisions are turning the channel on energy guzzling sets, making them go the way of rabbit ears and black and white broadcasts," quips EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson.

Energy Star estimates that if all of the TVs sold in the U.S. meet the new requirements, energy savings could grow to \$1 billion a year. Related (5020001.07 Randall O. Stenvik) greenhouse gas emissions, meanwhile, would be reduced by the equivalent of taking about one million cars off the road.

If you're not in the market for a new TV, you can still cut back on the electricity your old set uses by adjusting the picture settings. The brighter the screen, the more energy it needs. Also, the small stream of electricity a TV draws while in standby mode can be eliminated by unplugging it or by plugging it into a power strip that can be switched off.



Milton R. Young Station

Minnkota Power
COOPERATIVE, INC.

Square Butte
Electric Cooperative



Forty-four members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative and Clearwater-Polk Electric Cooperative participated in the power plant tour Sept. 10 and 11. The group is pictured by the Milton R. Young Station sign. The Young Station is a mine-mouth electric generating plant near Center, N.D. It is the primary source of electricity used by Red Lake Electric and Clearwater-Polk Electric members. Additional pictures appear on page 5.

Power plant tour enlightens Cooperative members

On Sept. 10 and 11, 44 members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative and Clearwater-Polk Electric Cooperative participated in a tour of the Milton R. Young Station near Center, N.D. and other interests along the way.

The tour started with a stop at Minnkota Power Cooperative's headquarters in Grand Forks. Tour participants viewed the diesel

generators and visited Minnkota Power's control center. The next stop was at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center and Fort Mandan near Washburn, N.D.

The second day of the trip included a tour of the Young Station. The station features (3728016.01 Douglas L. Johnston) two coal-fired electric plants with a combined generating capacity of 685,000 kilowatts. This is where the bulk of the electricity used by Red Lake Electric members is generated.

Next was a drive through the open-pit lignite coal mines operated by BNI Coal. About 4.5 million tons of coal is mined each year to

supply the Young Station. The highlight is seeing the large mining equipment, which includes a dragline with a 77 cubic yard bucket.

Members of Red Lake Electric who participated in the tour were: Bernard and Lorraine Schmitz, John and Myrna Erickson and Mark and Melanie LaCrosse of Red Lake Falls; Donovan and Verla Erlandson, Rudy and Helen Rude, Richard Kostrzewski and Andy Skaar of Thief River Falls; Gerald and Pearl Johnson, Crookston; John and Darlene Roseland, Newfolden; Vincent and Shirley Desseler, Oklee; and Andy and Karen Peterson, Trail.

Participating members of Clearwater-Polk Electric

were: Ervin Foldoe, Virgil and Leilani Prestby, Tony and Crystal Schmitz, Duane and Andrea Lundin, Duane and Doris Mathison and Bill and Edna McKinley of Bagley; Lester and Jean Sundquist, Gonvick; Robert and Sandra Greener, Jerry and Lana Wraa and Sara Johnson of Leonard; Mike and Jeanne Hanse, Shevlin; Glenn and Crystal Bergeron and Joe and Jackie Rendahl of Gully.

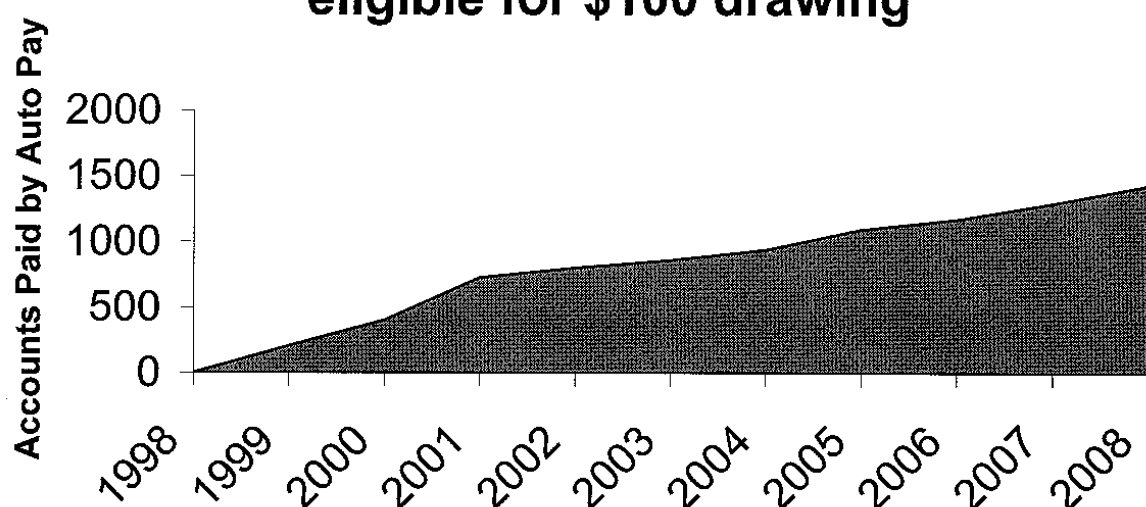
The tour of the power plant and coal mines gives participants a much better understanding and often a better appreciation of what is involved in the generation and transmission of electricity.

QUICK TAKES

A look at some statistics from your Red Lake Electric Cooperative

As the chart below shows, more and more Red Lake Electric Cooperative customers are enjoying the convenience and secure method of paying their monthly energy bill with Auto-Pay. To show our appreciation, customers who use Auto-pay to pay their monthly bill will automatically be entered into a \$100 drawing on October 6th. For your convenience, an Auto-pay sign up sheet is included with the bill you receive this month. Have a question about Auto-pay? Give us a call at Red Lake Electric Cooperative today. 1-800-245-6068 or 218-253-2168.

Auto-Pay Customers eligible for \$100 drawing



Electrical safety on the farm

Crisp, fall weather means harvest time on the farm. Don't let this harvest turn dangerous when electrical hazards are overlooked.

Farm workers are killed each year by electrocution when large farm machinery makes contact with overhead power lines. The following tips will help keep everyone on the farm safe:

- Look over work areas carefully for overhead power lines and utility poles.
- Make sure there are ample clearances of power lines when (6801003.01 LeRoy Carriere) moving large machinery such as combines, grain augers, pickers, bailers and front-end loaders.
- When planning new construction, consider existing power lines.
- Be extra careful when working around trees and brush that often obstruct power lines.
- Train all farm workers on how to properly operate machinery near overhead power lines.



Photo by Andrea Christoffer



Manager's Comments

by Roger Johanneck



Retail rate projections

Readers of the Volts and Jolts and Cooperative members who have attended previous district, informational or annual meetings have heard us talk, among other things, about the projections for future electric rates. When we are visiting with customers, we are frequently asked, "When are rates going up?" With the information we have been passing on in our newsletter and meetings, coupled with the increase costs we see in other forms of energy, that is certainly a reasonable question; a discussion we have come to expect.

Even though our cost of wholesale energy increased 3 percent earlier this year, the cooperative does not intend to change rates in 2008 as a follow-up to the increase from Minnkota Power Cooperative. However, Red Lake Electric will need to do something early in 2009 to cover an expected 13 percent increase in our wholesale energy costs from Minnkota and to make up for our loss of DBS franchise sale proceeds that ended this year.

For the past ten years, RLEC has received annual installment proceeds from the sale of the DBS business in 1999. The monies received from this sale were used to offset revenue that we would normally recover through RLEC's

retail rates. That good deal is now done. The last installment from the DBS sale was received earlier this year (February) and amounted to \$529,000 or 6 percent of our projected revenue for this year. We will need to recover this amount through future energy rates to make up for that income loss.

The bulk of Minnkota's planned increase in 2009 is due to construction and plant improvements made to the Milton R. Young generating units located in Center, N.D. New transmission lines and upgrades made to existing lines to handle the increasing demand for energy from the 11 distribution Cooperatives and cities of the Northern Municipal Power agency served by Minnkota Power, is also a reason for this rate increase.

We expect the wholesale cost of energy from Minnkota power to increase over the next several years as they meet environmental upgrades required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The cost of construction to meet the variety of Clean Air Act regulations is significant, but necessary for Minnkota as well as other large power plants across the county who must comply with numerous emissions regulations.

We won't know the exact

increase in rates needed in 2009 until we complete our budget later this year, but I expect an increase somewhere in the neighborhood of 15 percent. History at your cooperative shows us we have had higher increases than this and periods where we have gone years without any increase.

As you consider the information provided here, I hope (2310003.03 James Engelsrud) you find some consolation in knowing that our rates have been among the lowest across the state and nation for rural electric cooperatives and that we have been competitive with other forms of energy. We give you our continued pledge to do what we can to keep it that way.

As you look ahead to this winter and beyond, I encourage you to think energy efficiency when you make decisions about the products, appliances and heating system you use in your homes and businesses. Efficiency and conservation are the best ways to confront the rising cost of all forms of energy. If you currently heat with uncontrolled electricity, I recommend you consider an off-peak heating system. Give your local heating contractor or us a call soon and let us know how we can help you.

Energy efficiency behind the wheel

As increasing gasoline prices cause consumers to reach deeper into their wallets, buying an electric-gasoline hybrid vehicle, like a Toyota Prius or a Ford Escape SUV, has become a new craze. But if buying a more fuel-efficient hybrid to reduce your "pain at the pump" (and carbon footprint) isn't in your budget, here are some steps that can trim gas consumption and improve vehicle mileage:

- Observe the speed limit. While each vehicle reaches its optimal fuel economy at a different speed (or range of speeds), gas mileage usually decreases rapidly at speeds above 60 mph. Each 5 mph you drive over 60 mph, in fact, becomes the equivalent of spending an extra 30 cents per gallon for gas.
- Remove excess weight. Avoid keeping unnecessary items in your vehicle, especially heavy ones. An extra 100 pounds in your vehicle could reduce your miles per gallon by up to 2 percent. The reduction is based on the percentage of extra weight relative to the vehicle's weight and affects smaller vehicles more than larger ones.
- Avoid excessive idling. Cars with larger engines typically waste more gas at idle than cars with smaller engines.



Photo by Donnaree Hardy

- Use cruise control. Using cruise control on the highway helps you maintain a constant speed and, in most cases, will save gas.
- Use overdrive gears. When you use overdrive gearing, your car's engine speed goes down. This saves gas and reduces engine wear.
- Drive sensibly. Aggressive driving such as speeding, rapid acceleration and braking, wastes

gasoline. It can lower your gas mileage by 33 percent at highway speeds and by 5 percent around town. In addition, sensible driving makes things safer for you and others.

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.

From the mailbag

DEAR RLEC:

We thank you so very much for the wonderful power plant tour trip we recently enjoyed. It was very informative and gives us better appreciation for the electricity we enjoy. Kevin was a great host. The whole trip was great!

Thanks so much,
John and Darlene Roseland
Newfolden

DEAR RLEC:

I would like to thank Red Lake Electric and Clearwater-Polk Electric for the nice two-day trip we had to the Milton R. Young Station. I enjoyed the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, the Fort Mandan tour and the open pit coal mine tour. Thanks to Kevin Reich, our tour chaperone, Bob Baune, our bus driver who did a super job, plus everybody on the bus. Also, thanks to Lisa from Minnkota Power, Grand Forks, and Lisa from BNI Coal.

Thanks again,
Richard Kostrowski
Thief River Falls

DEAR RLEC:

Just want to drop you a note to say thank you for the wonderful trip we had on the plant tour to North Dakota. You treated us like kings, the food was terrific, the motel was great and the bus was also very nice. Lots of stops and food. So again, thanks so much, you did a great job and it was a great trip.

Sincerely,
Tony and Crystal Schmitz
Bagley

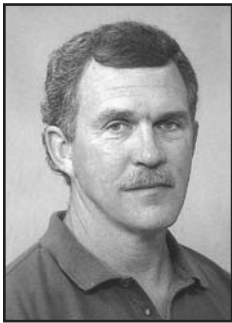
Mission Statement

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



Member Service Department

by Kevin Reich

Power plant tour

As referenced elsewhere in this issue of the *Volts and Jolts*, last week 44 members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative and Clearwater-Polk Electric Cooperative, of Bagley, participated in a tour of the Milton R. Young Station near Center, N.D.

The Young Station is a mine-mouth electric generating plant which is the primary source of generation for Minnkota Power Cooperative of Grand Forks, N.D.

Minnkota Power is the wholesale electric supplier for Red Lake Electric, Clearwater-Polk Electric and nine other electric distribution cooperatives in northwest Minnesota and eastern North Dakota.

The purpose of this tour, which has been offered for many years, is to give Cooperative members a bet-

ter understanding of what is involved with the generation and transmission of electricity. It is a complicated process to bring electricity from an open pit coal mine in North Dakota to a substation within Red Lake Electric Cooperative's service area.

It begins with a permitting process where volumes of pre-mining data are submitted to the North Dakota Public Service Commission to seek approval of mining the lignite coal.

The electricity is transmitted over hundreds of miles of line, ending (2032001.05 Nathan Liedberg) up at substations within the Cooperative's service area. From the substation, the Cooperative distributes it to local homes and businesses where with the flick of a switch,

one can turn on a single light bulb or start a multi-horsepower motor.

The generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity takes many people working around the clock, equipment of all kinds and sizes and many millions of dollars. It ends up in our homes or places of business providing us comfort and automation for only pennies a kilowatt hour.

The current practice has been to offer the power plant tour every other year. If you have not participated in the tour, I would certainly recommend it the next time it is offered. The tour is not only an educational opportunity, but a chance for some great fellowship and plenty of good food.

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

(USPS 663-400)

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Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.

One of the Minnkota Power Systems

Things you should know about your electric service

BILLINGS AND COLLECTION

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

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

If your payment is not received by the 15th of the month, a final notice of disconnection statement will be included on your following bill. The final notice statement will notify you when your electric service will be disconnected if the delinquent amount remains unpaid. If an employee is sent to disconnect your electric service, a \$50 collection fee will be charged to your account, even if you pay the collector.

To have a disconnected service reconnected, all amounts owing, a \$50 reconnection fee, and a security deposit must be paid. If the service must be reconnected after normal working hours, a \$100 reconnection fee must be paid.

BAD CHECKS

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

OUTAGES

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

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

METER TESTS

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

STOPPED METERS

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

METER READINGS

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

GENERAL SERVICE RATES

Facilities charge variable \$15 to \$21 month
First 500 KWH80¢ Kwh
Over 500 KWH (April-Dec.)57¢ Kwh
Over 500 KWH (Jan.-Mar.)65¢ 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.

Recipe corner

Angel Biscuits

1 package dry yeast
2 tbl. warm water
5 c. flour
3 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
4 tbl. sugar
1 tsp. salt
1 c. shortening
2 c. buttermilk

Dissolve yeast in warm water. Sift together the dry ingredients. Cut in shortening and add yeast and buttermilk, mixed, to dry mixture. Knead the dough until it holds together. Roll out in rectangular shape to 1/4-inch thickness. Spread generously with soft oleo and fold over. Cut with biscuit cutter. Put on a cookie sheet. Place in deepfreeze long enough to freeze hard. Then bag them in plastic freezer bag and keep in freezer. When ready to use, set the biscuits out the night before. Bake next morning at 400 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes or until brown.

This recipe is convenient and makes about 24 biscuits, depending on the size of your cutter.

Snick-Snack

1 lb almond bark
In large roaster or container, put 1 small box of each of the following:
Wheat Chex
Rice Chex
Corn Chex
Bran Chex
Cheerios
Add:
6 c. popped popcorn
6 c. stick type pretzel
3 c. raisins
1 can salted nuts
Mix all of the ingredients together. Melt the almond bark and pour it over the mixture. Mix until lightly covered and let bark dry.

Honey Apple Pie

Prepared pastry for 2-crust pie
6 medium apples
1 tbl. flour
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. salt
3 tbl. brown sugar
1/3 c. honey

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Fill pastry shell with apples. Mix flour, cin-
namon, salt, brown sugar and honey. Pour over apples. Put on top crust;
seal, making ridge. Slit and bake at 450 degrees for 15 minutes; then reduce
heat to 350 degrees for 25-35 minutes until bubbly.

Topping:
1/4 c. brown sugar
3 tbl. honey
2 tbl. flour
2 tbl. soft butter
1/4 c. walnuts

Mix topping ingredients. Spread over crust and return the pie to oven for
10 minutes.

Apple Muffins

1 1/2 c. packed brown sugar
2/3 c. vegetable oil
1 egg
1 c. sour milk or buttermilk
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla
2 1/2 c. flour
1 1/2 c. diced apples and peelings
1/2 c. nuts

Topping:
1/3 c. granulated sugar
1 tbl. melted butter

Combine brown sugar, vegetable oil and egg. Mix thoroughly with elec-
tric mixer. In another bowl, mix together the milk, baking soda, salt and
vanilla. Add milk mixture to sugar mixture, alternating with flour. Mix well
after each addition. Fold in apples and nuts. Put in muffin tins, using muf-
fin papers (grease tins if not using papers). Spoon on the topping mix. Bake
at 325 degrees for 30 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out
clean. Makes about 24. Can be frozen.

Meat Stuffed French Bread

2 tbl. vegetable oil
1 1/2 lb ground beef
2 8-ounce cans tomato sauce
1/2 can chopped onion
1/4 c. chopped parsley
1 1/4 tsp. dried Italian seasoning
1 beef bouillon cube
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 c. shredded Mozzarella cheese
1/2 c. grated Parmesan cheese
1 egg, slightly beaten
1/4 c. chopped mushrooms
1 loaf French bread

Place oil and beef in skillet. Cook, stirring occasionally, until beef is
brown. Drain. Stir in tomato sauce, onion, parsley, Italian seasoning, bouil-
lon cube and garlic. Heat to boiling; reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes.
Cool 5 minutes. Stir in cheeses, egg and mushrooms.

Cut a 1 1/2-inch horizontal slice off top of bread, leaving 1 inch sides.
Remove center of bread; save this bread for other use. Stuff meat mixture
into bread shell. Butter a large piece of foil; wrap loaf inside it.

Bake at 300 degrees for 30 minutes. Remove foil. If desired, sprinkle 1/4
c. shredded Mozzarella over the top. Return to the oven for 5 minutes to melt
cheese.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Wild Rice Fruit Salad

3 c. cooked wild rice
1 8-oz. can of crushed pineapple, drained
1 17-oz. can fruit cocktail, drained
1 11-oz. can mandarin oranges, drained
1/2 (3-oz.) jar maraschino cherries, halved
1 c. chopped walnuts
1 c. miniature marshmallows
1 3-oz. package unflavored gelatin
2 c. whipped cream topping

Cook wild rice and chill. Add remaining ingredients in large bowl, blend
together. Sprinkle top with coconut.

Basic wild rice preparation:
1 c. wild rice yields 3 c. cooked rice.

Wash wild rice in several waters. Combine 1 c. wild rice with 3 c. water
in a 2-quart covered casserole. Bake at 350 degrees for about 1 hour until
fluffy.

TV converter box coupon program

Midnight, Feb. 17, 2009, televi-
sion viewing in America is sched-
uled to change. All full-power tele-
vision stations in the U.S. are con-
verting their broadcasting from
analogue to 100 percent digital.
This will result in better clarity of
viewing and more programming
options for the public.

Individual households will be
required to have a conversion box if
their television sets are not con-
trolled through cable, satellite or
fiber optics. From now until March
2009, consumers will be able to
apply for up to two \$40 coupons
per household provided by the U.S.
Government.

The converter box is a one time
purchase and prices are expected to
range between \$50 and \$70 without
the coupon. Coupons expire within
90 days of the date they are mailed
out to consumers. Local retailers
will carry the boxes for purchase.

For complete information here is
a list of web sites to visit:
For coupon applications visit
www.dtv2009.gov.

For information on where to
purchase converter boxes visit
www.ntiadtv.gov.

For information on how to
install a converter box visit
www.DigitalTips.org.

To learn more about options visit
www.DTVTransition.org.

Top dairy herds for August DHIA

Randy Rasmussen, supervisor of the Red Lake-Pennington DHIA, put the fol-
lowing herds at top 10 in the association for August.

Name	Cows	% in milk	lbs. milk	lbs. test	lbs. fat	lbs. protein
Walter Bros. Farm	303	91	74	3.1	2.3	3.0
NW Research & Outreach	110	90	74	3.3	2.5	3.1
Spring Prairie Colony	340	89	64	3.8	2.4	2.9
Beyer Bros. Farm	77	91	64	3.3	2.1	3.0
Wayra Dairy, 3X	217	89	63	3.5	2.2	2.9
E. Duane & Faith Knott	88	90	62	3.6	2.2	2.9
Robert and Terri Dahlen	56	84	61	3.4	2.1	3.0
Northstar Dairy, 3X	856	89	59	3.8	2.3	3.1
Christianson Farms	52	85	55	3.9	2.1	2.9
Paul Duray	44	100	55	3.7	2.0	3.1

The herd averages are affected by the number of dry cows in the herd. The amount of milk or butterfat is averaged out over all the cows. This gives the farmer a record of the earning power of the herd for the month. If too many cows are included in the herd, then the average for the month may be low, even though the cow that is milking produces a lot of milk.



Mickelson Eye Clinic, P.A.

Craig R. Mickelson, O.D.

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Thief River Falls, MN 56701-0521

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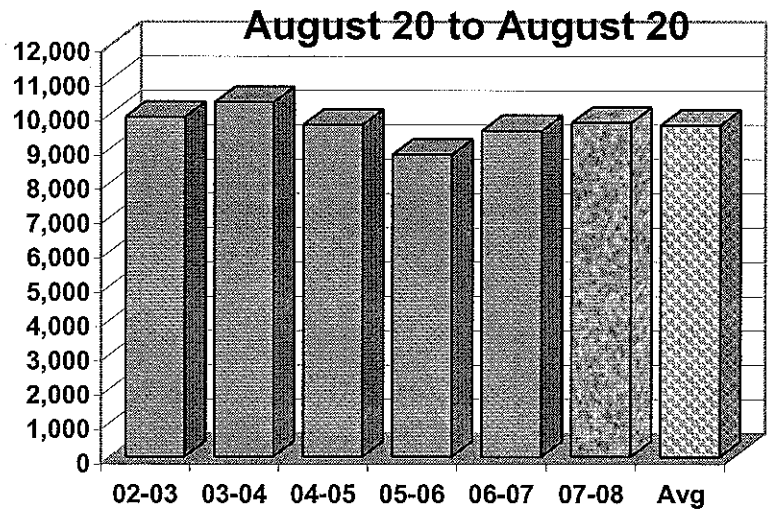


Call Lori Melby to find out how she can help you find the right insurance coverage at the best price!

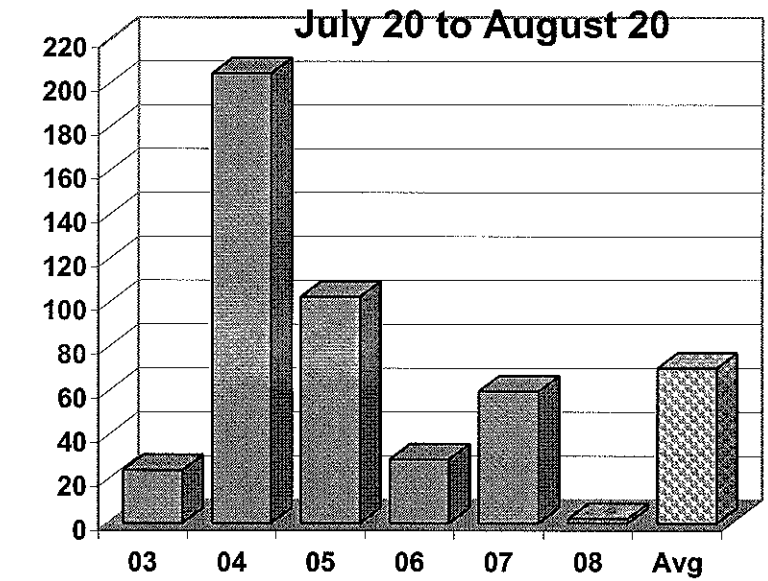


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YEAR TO DATE DEGREE DAYS



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2000 ZR 500 EFI, New Top End, 4,100Miles	\$2,699
2005 F7 EFI, Red, EXT, 1,100 Miles	\$4,499
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VOLTS AND JOLTS FEATURE OF THE MONTH

The Ericksons tour the place where it all begins

John and Myrna Erickson of Red Lake Falls were recent participants in the Red Lake Electric Cooperative and Clearwater-Polk Electric Cooperative of Bagley power plant tour Sept. 10 and 11.

After leaving Red Lake Falls, the group arrived at the Minnkota Power Cooperative (MPC) headquarters in Grand Forks.

Minnkota Power is the wholesale electric supplier for Red Lake Electric, Clearwater-Polk Electric and nine other electric cooperatives in Northwest Minnesota and Eastern North Dakota.

The group was given a tour of the state of the art facility where all of the electricity is controlled and monitored. The monitors indicate where the electricity is being used and what demand there is. If someone in the service area calls after hours about an outage, they will be directed to Grand Forks to the dispatchers.

They observed the bank of generators and the control room which was lined with monitors. The tourists were shown the standby diesel generators some of which are from World War II ships. The units are massive and weigh many tons.

From Grand Forks, the Ericksons and the rest of the tour went to Washburn where they saw the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center and nearby Fort Mandan. On display at the Interpretive Center, which is located on the banks of the Missouri River, were lots of pictures and a replica of a canoe, as well as period artifacts.

At Fort Mandan, there was everything from muskets and weapons to surveying equipment. The muskets or weapons were for getting wild game, as the people back then lived off the land and would trade with the Native Americans for food.

The group stayed the night in Mandan, N.D. While at the hotel, they were shown a video presentation of the the Milton R. Young Power Plant, the next leg of the tour, which is also known as Young I and Young II. There was a question and answer period led by Lisa Pickard from Minnkota Power. One popular question had to do with the cost of electricity from wind power.

The Erickson's learned that it costs \$1 million per turbine. Currently, the U.S. government subsidizes wind energy by about 2 cents per kilowatt hour. Even with the credit, wind energy costs about twice as much as the energy generated from the Young I & II coal fired power plants.

In 2007, the Minnkota associated systems had access to one of the lowest average wholesale electric rates in the county with 3.8 cents per kilowatt-hour

John and Myrna Erickson

(kWh) and average retail residential rates were 7.3 cents per kWh.

When you come to the Milton R. Young power plant, the first thing you see, outside of the towering stacks, are the trucks arriving from the BNI coal mines with 3 foot chunks of lignite. At the coal mine, the coal is hauled out with huge shovels, which hold several truck loads. BNI is contracted by Minnkota to harvest about 200 acres (4.3 million tons) per year of coal for the Young station, with a reserve of 600 million tons.

They have special roads from the coal mines to the power plant for the massive trucks that carry 180 tons each trip. Two enormous electric walking draglines remove the overburden from the coal seam. When the mining is done, BNI replaces the overburden and starts the process of reclamation of the area to return it to its

natural habit.

BNI reclaims all the land that is disturbed in the process of getting the coal and uses it to restore the land complete with native plants and species reestablished. All stages of the reclamation is monitored and enforced by the North Dakota Public Service Commission.

Back at the Young station, the chunks go through a crushing process that reduces the coal into more manageable, pebble-sized, granules that are stored in massive bins that hold about 700 tons of material.

The crushed coal is then fed into the plant on conveyor belts and fed into the cyclone burners. "We found out that lignite is 38 percent moisture and 10 percent ash. It hardly burns. They get it started with fuel oil," stated Myrna.

Water is pumped out of the Missouri River seven miles away and is purified for use in the plant. The water used in the boilers must be absolutely pure.

The boilers operate at 3000° Fahrenheit creating superheated steam. The steam is used to power a high pressure turbine. The steam expelled from the first turbine has lost some heat and pressure and so is fed into a medium pressure turbine and finally a low pressure turbine. This process maximizes the amount of horsepower or work the steam can provide before it condenses back into water. The water is cleaned and returned to the boilers to start the process once again or discharged in nearby Nelson Lake.

The lake goes up to around 95° in the summer and does not freeze in the winter but does get rather cold. There are fish that live in the lake and it is used for recreational purposes. The water discharged from the plant and into the lake is tested and has been found to be more pure than the natural lake water.

The exhaust gases from the combustion of the coal is scrubbed by the plant's emissions control devices and is then vented into the atmosphere through the stacks. "What you see coming out of the stacks is mostly water vapor," said Myrna.

Throughout the process there are byproducts such as slag. "Slag is almost as hard as concrete, it can be used to help control the dust on roads or used as an abrasive for sand blasting," John said. The fly ash and sulfur dioxide byproducts are made into a slurry that is deposited in a disposal pond. The plant takes steps to

ensure compliance with federal and state emission limits as well as federal ambient air quality standards.

John and Myrna agreed that that the plant was extremely clean. "There was no dust or dirt anywhere which was a surprise. There were no dirty clothes on any of the workers either," the couple added.

"It is very technical in the plant with very skilled people working there," added John.

The Erickson's went on this trip as it was offered from RLEC as a tour for a specific cost and certain dates.

Myrna and John Erickson are dwarfed by the size of the bucket used on the "Liberty" dragline. The bucket has a 77-cubic-yard capacity. The dragline is used to remove, on average, 80 feet of overburden to expose the seam of lignite coal.

The Erickson farm was connected to the Red Lake Electric power system sometime in the 1940s on the farm that John's grandfather settled in 1888.

John and Myrna were married in 1965. He has always been self-employed. They have two children, a son who is in insurance and a daughter who is a nurse, and three grandsons.

John operated a dairy farm with 60 head until 1987. He is still farms 900 acres but rents the rest out. They grow wheat, soybeans, and corn for grain. Myrna retired at the end of December from her career as Food Service Director for the Thief River Falls school district.

They built their current home in 1972. The Erickson's have off-peak electric heat in their home. The heating system consists of electric heat for the main source with fuel oil backup and a gas fireplace. Control of the off-peak electric heat is done from Minnkota Power Cooperative's headquarters in Grand Forks.

Their hobbies include fishing, hunting, traveling, visiting family, bicycling, gardening, and quilting.

Some of the community organizations they have been involved with include Blackriver Township clerk for 51 years; MN Wheat Growers association; on the board of directors for the Rural St. Hilaire Fire Association; and MN school nutrition association.

"We enjoy having very dependable and affordable energy," stated the Erickson's. They still believe that we need affordable coal powered energy outside of wind power.

The dragline "Liberty" is a Bucyrus electric dragline, weighing 4,628 tons. It has a boom length of 355 feet. Liberty was put into service for BNI Coal in 2004 at a cost of \$37 million. Replacement cost today would be \$125 million. Liberty was the first dragline to be assembled in North America in over 20 years. It is still the newest operating dragline in North America but one is currently beeing assembled in Canada.

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Power plant tour guests of Red Lake Electric Cooperative and Clearwater-Polk Electric Cooperative gather within the training room of the Milton R. Young Station. Guests were given a complete overview of how the electric generating plant operates.



Tour guests listening to the story of Fort Mandan include, from left, Verla and Donovan Erlandson of Thief River Falls and Bernard and Lorraine Schmitz of Red Lake Falls. Fort Mandan was not only the home of Lewis and Clark for five months in 1804 and 1805, but also the home of a Shoshone woman named Sacagawea (Sakakawea). She and her husband Toussaint Charbonneau, a French trapper, were taken on the expedition to serve as translators and guides.



Darlene and John Roseland, Newfolden, listen intently as they partake of the tour within the Milton R. Young Station. The Young Station is a mine-mouth, electric generating plant supplying most of the electricity used by members of the Red Lake Electric Cooperative.



Bernard Schmitz, Red Lake Falls, visits with BNI Coal tour guide Lisa Engelbretson. BNI Coal is the mining company that supplies the lignite for the Milton R. Young Station. BNI has the distinction of being the lowest-cost producer to a major lignite user in North Dakota.



Members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative and Clearwater-Polk Electric Cooperative check out a reproduction of a dugout that was used by members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The dugout is housed in the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center at Washburn, N.D. The dugouts were made from cottonwood trees and were used to carry equipment, instruments, weapons, and trade goods as Lewis and Clark traveled up the Missouri River.



Rudy Rude, Thief River Falls, is pictured with Minnkota Power employee and tour coordinator Lisa Pickard. Being in the sand, gravel and construction business, Rudy took great interest in the equipment used in the coal mining process.



Rudy Rude, left, Thief River Falls, visits with Andy Peterson, Trail, outside of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center at Washburn, N.D. The interpretive center is equipped with many pieces helping to explain the Lewis and Clark Expedition. During the two days of the tour there is time allotted for fellowship and refreshments.



Gerald Johnson, right, Crookston, stands in the foreground within the reconstructed Fort Mandan. Members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition built Fort Mandan along the Missouri River in the fall of 1804. Forty-seven people took refuge in the fort for five months departing in early April 1805 to continue their journey northwestward.



Power plant tour guests look into the control room of the Milton R. Young Station as the tour guide explains the function of the control room, the operators and the equipment. Guests include, from left, John and Myrna Erickson and Mark and Melanie LaCrosse of Red Lake Falls and Vincent Dessellier of Oklee.



Andy Skaar, left, Thief River Falls, visits with Verla and Donovan Erlandson, Thief River Falls, outside the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, with the Missouri River in the background. The Missouri River was the route taken during the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804 and 1805.



Guests of the power plant tour were given a walk-through tour of the coal fired electric generating plant. For safety purposes, all tour guests were required to wear safety hats and glasses. Because of the noise within the plant, guests were also equipped with listening devices to hear the tour guide.



Pictured is the turbine generator of Unit II at the Milton R. Young Station. It is a Westinghouse generator with a maximum output of 455,000 kilowatts. Construction costs of Unit II, completed in 1977, was \$251.7 million. Unit II consumes approximately 8,500 tons of lignite daily. Tour participants were impressed by the cleanliness of the Young Station.

Five Brekke brothers served in the U.S. Army spanning two wars

By Stacy Kleinwachter

Leonard O. and Ellna (Peterson) Brekke of Plummer, shouldered much concern, as five of their eleven children went into the U.S. Army. They were very proud of their sons, Willmar, Joseph, Leonard A., Donald and LeRoy. It was unique that five from the same family, from a small community, would serve the military at roughly the same time and none of them died at war. This was at a time when patriotism was at an all time high in our country.

Willmar, who was born in 1913, served in World War II. He served with special forces in the Aleutian Islands, Africa and Italy campaigns. He died in July 1991.

Joseph, who was born in 1915, served as a Tech 5 in World War II. He served Oct. 15, 1942 to Nov. 10, 1945. He was in the Battle Eastern Mandate, in the Western Pacific. He received the Asiatic Pacific Service Ribbon,

Good Conduct Medal and four overseas bars. After the service, he married Rachel Hill and had two children, Bruce and Kathy. Upon his eventual death he was laid to rest at Fort Snelling.

Leonard A., who was born 1921, served as a Tech 4 in World War II. He served from 1942-1945. He attended Signal Corp School at Camp Crowder in Missouri, then was transferred to Fort Dix in New Jersey. From there, he went to Camp Stoneman in California to go overseas. He served two years in the South Pacific where he was a high speed radio operator and rifle expert. He served in New Guinea, Southern Philippines Liberation and the

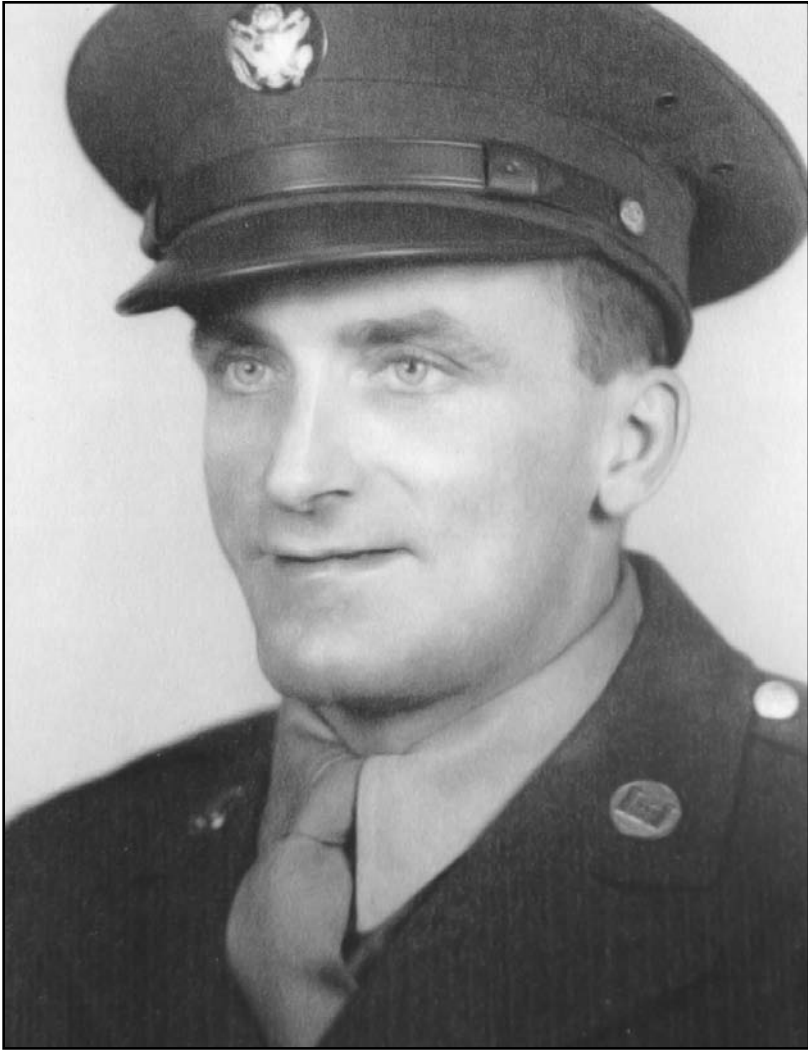
Western Pacific, where he was awarded three bronze stars. He was discharged from the service at Camp McCoy in November 1945. After the service he married Vivian Olson and had two sons, Greg and Mark.

Donald, who was born in 1930, was a Private in the U.S. Army. He was inducted Sept. 19, 1951 at Assignment Headquarters Battery 86, AAA Gun B at Fort Sheridan, Ill. He attended artillery school and was a vehicle mechanic at Fort Sill, Okla., and Fort Bliss, Texas. He was discharged in 1953 from Fort Sheridan, Ill. After the service, he married Gail Knutson and had four sons, Bob, Brian, Jay and Mick.

LeRoy was a Corporal in the Korean War. He had basic training at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas. He had active duty from March 1953-1955, in the 5th Armored Division, 10th Tank Battalion, Fort Sam, Houston, Texas. After the service, he married Lila Malwitz. He and his wife currently live in Arizona.



Willmar Carl Brekke



Joseph Alvin Brekke



Donald Oliver Brekke



LeRoy Brekke

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Newcastle's disease found in pelican at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

The National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wis., recently confirmed that a sick American white pelican captured at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Marshall County tested positive for a virulent form of Newcastle's disease.

Newcastle's disease is caused by viruses that exhibit a wide range of virulence, from mild to severe. Although Newcastle's disease viruses are not uncommon in populations of certain bird species, most are the mild strains and are not usually associated with disease. Conversely, the virulent (severe) form of Newcastle's disease can be highly infectious to domestic poultry and can cause high mortality rates in unvaccinated birds.

Outbreaks of Newcastle's disease are rare in the U.S. in wild birds, with the exception of outbreaks in double-crested cormorants, American white pelicans and gulls in several midwestern states and Canadian provinces during 1975, 1990, 1992, 1995 and 1999.

Although waterfowl and other bird species are known to carry some of the non-virulent strains of Newcastle's viruses, mortality during outbreaks in the U.S. has gener-

ally been limited to pelicans, gulls and cormorants. Transmission of this disease is generally from direct contact with bodily secretions and/or aerosols. It can also be transmitted by contaminated boots, clothing or equipment.

Aside from the potentially devastating effects of Newcastle's disease on domestic poultry, the disease has minimal public health significance. Some individuals working in direct contact with infected birds may develop mild eye or respiratory infections.

Because Agassiz NWR has encountered a handful of other sick and dead pelicans and the virulent strain of Newcastle's disease has been confirmed at no less than seven other lakes in Minnesota this year, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff plan to err on the side of caution with respect to public use activities on the Refuge this fall.

The confirmation of this disease on the Refuge will have multiple public use ramifications, including: public duck banding night, which was scheduled for Sept. 20, will be canceled in 2008; the Lost Bay Habitat Drive will be closed until further notice; school groups scheduled to assist with the Refuge duck banding program will need to re-

schedule for the fall of 2009; and visitors will not be allowed special access to closed portions of the Refuge (i.e., for bird watching, sightseeing) until further notice.

As with other disease considerations concerning wild gamebirds (e.g., botulism, avian influenza, West Nile Virus), hunters are simply encouraged to use common sense practices when handling, cleaning and cooking birds they have shot. These include wearing protective gloves when cleaning game, washing hands thoroughly after handling game and thoroughly cooking all wild meat.

Anyone who encounters sick or dead waterbirds should contact Agassiz NWR or their local Minnesota DNR personnel as soon as possible. If someone has recently come in contact with birds dead from unknown causes, it is recommended that to quarantine the individual from susceptible birds, such as pet birds, backyard and commercial poultry flocks and captive birds at zoos, for a minimum of five days.

For more information or answers to questions on the above situation at Agassiz NWR, call the Refuge headquarters at 218-449-4115.

Small game season open

Grouse, rabbit, squirrel and partridge seasons opened Sept. 13, offering Minnesotans the chance to discover the state's vast amounts of land open to public hunting, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

"Small game season is a forgotten pleasure," said Dennis Simon, DNR wildlife section chief. "It doesn't take a large investment of time and money or much hunting expertise to get out and find a few squirrels and rabbits."

Simon noted many small game populations are relatively strong year-in, year-out. "Minnesota is consistently one of the top ruffed-grouse harvest states in the nation. What better place to introduce someone new to this type of hunting?" asked Simon.

Basic requirements include a blaze orange-colored article of clothing above the waist, a small caliber rifle or shotgun and a valid hunting license and firearms safety training.

Complete details about seasons, requirements and bag limits are listed on pages 42-47 of the 2008 Minnesota Hunting and Trapping Regulations Handbook.

"Finding a place to hunt is the most difficult obstacle for many people," Simon said. "But many people don't know that Minnesota offers hunting in its 1.2-million-acre Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system as well as state, county and national forests."

The WMA system, one of the largest and most-developed in the U.S., contains 1,380 public wildlife areas across Minnesota, with habi-

Minnesota traffic deaths up slightly for 2007

The state's annual summary of traffic crashes, Minnesota Motor Vehicle Crash Facts, reports 510 people were killed on state roads in 2007, up from 494 in 2006. Contributing to the 3.5 percent death increase was the 35W bridge collapse; 12 of the 13 bridge fatalities were classified as traffic deaths. The full report is available online at www.dps.state.mn.us/ots.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) compiles the report which details crashes by vehicle type, contributing factors, driver age and gender, and occurrence of crashes by county, as well as cities with populations of 2,500 or more.

Crash Facts 2007 reports more than 81,000 crashes, 510 deaths and nearly 36,000 injuries. The estimated economic impact of these incidents is more than \$1.65 billion, which includes such cost factors as wage and productivity losses, medical and emergency expenses and employer's uninsured costs.

The fatalities reflect the deaths of motorists, 399, motorcyclists, 61, pedestrians, 33, bicyclists, 4, ATV riders, 4, snowmobilers, 3, occupants driving or riding farm equipment, 3, and other, 3.

Crash Facts reports more than 57 billion vehicle miles traveled

(VMT) on state roads last year. The fatality rate per 100 million VMT is less than one person, 0.89, which is among the lowest in the nation and is down from a rate of 5.52 in 1966. There are 3.9 million licensed drivers and 4.8 million registered vehicles in Minnesota.

Of the 399 vehicle occupants killed, 195, or 49 percent, were not wearing seat belts. During nighttime hours, 9 p.m. to 3 a.m., only 28 of the 91 motorists killed were belted. Of impaired drivers killed, nearly 75 percent were unbuckled. There were 190 alcohol-related traffic deaths in 2007, up from the all-time low of 166 in 2006. More than 38,600 motorists were arrested for DWI last year. The estimated economic cost of impaired crashes, deaths and injuries is more than \$314 million.

People under age 30 accounted for 34 percent of the deaths. Teens were represented in 41 deaths, a 37 percent drop from 65 deaths in 2006. Teen deaths have dropped significantly since 2003, when 88 teens were killed. Officials say the new teen driver nighttime and passenger limitation laws will help to continue this trend.

One in four fatal crashes occurred between 3 and 7 p.m. The deadliest hours for fatal crashes were 2 to 3 p.m., amounting to 32 deaths, and 5 to 6 p.m., 35 deaths. Geographically, 168 deaths, or 33 percent, occurred in the Twin Cities' seven-county metro area which has 54 percent of the state's population. While 342 deaths, or 67 percent, occurred within the 80 counties of greater Minnesota.

Traffic deaths in Minnesota of motorcycle operators or passengers dropped from 70 deaths in 2006 to 61 in 2007, yet motorcyclist deaths still accounted for 12 percent of all

road deaths. Motorcycles represent just 4 percent of all registered vehicles.

In the last five years, the state's traffic deaths have trended lower: 2003 reported 655 deaths, 2004 had 567, 2005 had 559, 2006 had 494 and 2007 reported 510. Public safety officials attribute the trend to enhanced, better-targeted enforcement efforts and increased seat belt use rates. Officials also say the Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) program has been effective.

TZD is a multi-agency partnership led by the Minnesota departments of Public Safety and Health and Transportation with partners including the State Patrol, Federal Highway Administration, county engineers and the Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota. The TZD goal is 400 or fewer traffic deaths by 2010.

"Preventing deaths and serious injuries on state roads ultimately comes down to driver behavior," says DPS Commissioner Michael Campion, who stresses seat belt use, driving at safe speeds, paying attention and never driving impaired. "And while we can't ignore the progress we've made, we can't ignore solutions that will help save more lives, such as a primary seat belt law."

To-date in 2008, the state has tallied 269 road deaths, compared to 306 at this time in 2007 which amounts to a 12 percent drop in deaths. The driver behaviors officers cite most often as contributing factors in fatal crashes are illegal or unsafe speed, followed by inattention. The most common factors in all crashes are, in order of frequency, driver inattention or distraction, failure to yield right-of-way and illegal or unsafe speed.

Car seat check-up clinic set for Sept. 30 in Plummer

Inter-County Nursing Service will be offering car seat checks by appointment Sept. 30 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Plummer Fire Department, located on Oak Street in Plummer.

At that time, Inter-County Nursing staff will answer questions and review the installation of attendee's car seats to see how securely they are placed in the car and review how the car seat fits attendee's children.

Bring the following to the clinic: the primary vehicle that the child will ride in, the child or children

that will be sitting in the car seat, the car seat, the car seat manual and the vehicle manual.

Car seats will be available if the attendee's current one is unfit for use. These car seats are made possible through a grant.

Call the Inter-County Nursing Service at 218-681-0876 or toll-free at 1-866-321-0999 to set up an appointment time.

There is no cost to attend the clinic. This car seat check-up clinic has been funded by a grant through the Red Lake County Collaborative.

New web site to track fall colors unveiled by DNR

People can now follow the changing fall colors like never before with the help of a new Web page unveiled today by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

"Minnesotans traditionally like to get out and hike, bike, camp or just take a scenic drive to enjoy the splendors of our fall colors," said DNR Commissioner Mark Holsten. "This new site provides a variety of information that helps them do just

that."

Minnesota state park staff update the fall color information every Thursday, just in time for the weekend.

The new site features a color-coded map that shows where the fall colors are at their peak. There is a top picks section, which highlights the Minnesota state parks with the best options for viewing fall colors and the best viewing areas within each of the 72 state parks and recreation areas.

People can also upload photos on the site, sharing their fall color experiences with fellow Minnesotans.

To view the DNR's fall colors page, visit www.mndnr.gov.

Back to school safety tips

Advice for children, parents and drivers

With the start of each new school year, students are once again rushing to be on time, parents are getting them on their way, and drivers are going about their business but experts say all could heed some advice on safety.

- Tips for walking or biking to school**
 - Walk with a friend.
 - Pay attention to all traffic signals and crossing guards. Never cross the street against a stop light.
 - Cross only at crosswalks and never run into the street from between parked cars.
 - Look left, right and over your shoulder for traffic before crossing a street and continue to check each direction.
 - Make sure drivers see you by making eye contact with them.
 - If riding a bicycle, scooter or

skateboard to school, always wear a helmet and ride in the same direction as traffic. Walk your bike if crossing a street.

- Tips for school bus riders**
 - Do not play in the street while waiting for the bus.
 - Line up facing the bus, not alongside it.
 - After getting off the bus, move out of traffic.
 - Wait for the bus driver to signal you to cross the street. Walk away from the front of the bus so the driver can see you.

- Tips for parents and drivers**
 - Everyone should wear a seat-belt, and children should be in age- and size-appropriate car seats.
 - Stay focused on driving and don't be distracted by children in the car or with other activities.
 - Slow down in school zones.

Driving just 5 MPH over the speed limit increases the risk of hitting a child and the severity of any injuries.

- You never know if children crossing the street are paying attention, so remain stopped until the child has crossed not only your lane of traffic but the adjacent lane as well.
- Never pass a vehicle that has stopped at a crosswalk because they may be waiting for someone to cross.
- Do not pass a school bus when its red lights are flashing, even if it is on the other side of the street.
- Use extra care in areas where children may enter the road from between parked vehicles or other things that block drivers' view of the road. And watch out for bicycles.

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Review the cold weather disconnection law

The cold weather law, which became effective Aug. 1, 1995, provides a guideline for Red Lake Electric Cooperative to use for properly notifying a customer of their delinquent account and determining when electricity can be shut off during the cold weather season (Oct. 15 through April 15).

This law also provides a guideline for customers to follow when their electric service is up for disconnection and what they must do to avoid disconnection of electricity during the cold weather season.

It's important to remember the cold weather rule does not prevent a shutoff of electricity during the cold weather season. Only you, the customer, can prevent a shutoff of electricity from occurring.

Other than paying your bill when it is due, you can prevent a shutoff from occurring by responding to the information RLEC will deliver with each collection notice during the cold weather months. Should you have any questions about the cold weather rule or the shutoff protection information that will be attached to each collection notice, please call RLEC. We want to help you prevent a cold weather shutoff.

COLD WEATHER LAW

216B.097. Cold weather rule, cooperative or municipal utility.

Subdivision 1. Application; notice to residential customer.

(a) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

1. The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. A municipal utility or cooperative electric association utility may (i) verify income on forms it provides or (ii) obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, that uses an income eligibility threshold at or below 50 percent of the state median household income;

2. A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household; and

3. A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

(b) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must, between August 15 and October 15 each year, notify all residential customers of the provisions of this section.

Subdivision 2. Notice to residential customers

facing disconnection.

Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during the period between Oct. 15 and April 15, a municipal utility or cooperative electric association must provide the following information to a customer:

1. A notice of proposed disconnection;
2. A statement explaining the customer's rights and responsibilities;
3. A list of local energy assistance providers;
4. Forms on which to declare inability to pay; and
5. A statement explaining available time payment plans and other opportunities to secure continued utility service.

Subdivision 3. Restrictions if disconnection is necessary.

(a) If a residential customer must be involuntarily disconnected between October 15 and April 15 for failure to comply with subdivision 1, the disconnection must not occur:

1. on a Friday, unless the customer declines to enter into a payment agreement offered that day in person or via personal contact by telephone by a municipal utility or cooperative electric association;
2. on a weekend, holiday or the day before a holiday;
3. when utility offices are closed;
4. after the close of business on a day when disconnection is permitted, unless a field representative of a municipal utility or cooperative electric association who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement, accept payment and continue service, offers a payment agreement to the customer.

Further, the disconnection must not occur until at least 20 days after the notice required in subdivision 2 has been mailed to the customer or 15 days after the notice has been personally delivered to the customer.

(b) If the customer does not respond to a disconnection notice, the customer must not be disconnected until the utility investigates whether the residential unit is actually occupied. If the unit is found to be occupied, the utility must immediately inform the occupant of the provisions of this section. If the unit is unoccupied, the utility must give seven days' written notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy assistance provider before making a disconnection.

(c) If, prior to the disconnection, a customer appeals a notice of involuntary disconnection, as provided by the utility's established appeal procedure, the utility must not disconnect until the appeal is resolved.

Subdivision 4. Application to service limiters. For the purposes of this section, "disconnection" includes a service or load limiter or any device that limits or interrupts electric service in any way.

Important notice for military personnel

Section 1. [325E.027] UTILITY PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR MILITARY SERVICE PERSONNEL

Subdivision 1. **Restriction on disconnection; payment schedules.** (a) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association or public utility must not disconnect the utility service of a residential customer if a member of the household has been issued orders into active duty, for deployment or change in duty station if such a residential customer:

(1) has a household income below the state median household income or is receiving energy assistance and enters into an agreement with the municipal utility, cooperative electric association or public utility under which the residential customer pays ten percent of the customer's gross monthly income toward the customer's bill and the residential customer remains reasonably current with those payments; or

(2) has a household income above the state median household income and enters into an agreement with the municipal utility, cooperative electric association or public utility establishing a reasonable payment schedule that considers the financial resources of the

household and the residential customer remains reasonably current with payments under the payment schedule.

(b) For purpose of this subdivision, "household income" means household income measured after the date of the orders specified in paragraph (a).

Subd. 2. Annual notice to all customers; inability to pay forms.

(a) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association or public utility must notify all residential customers annually of the provisions of this section.

(b) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association or public utility must provide a form to a residential customer to request the protections of this section upon the residential customer's request.

Subd. 3. **Application to service limiters.** For the purposes of this section, "disconnection" includes a service or load limiter or any device that limits or interrupts electric service in any way.

Subd. 4. **Income verification.** Verification of income may be conducted by the local energy assistance provider or the municipal utility, cooperative electric association or public utility unless the customer is automatically eligible for protection against disconnection as

a recipient of any form of public assistance, including energy assistance that uses income eligibility in an amount at or below the income eligibility in subdivision 1, clause (1).

Subd. 5. Appeal process.

(a) The municipal utility, cooperative electric association or public utility shall provide the residential customer with a commission-approved written notice of the right to appeal to the commission or other appropriate governing body when the utility and residential customer are unable to agree on the establishment, reasonableness or modification of a payment schedule, provided for by this section. Any appeal must be made within seven working days after the residential customer's receipt of personally served notice, or within ten working days after the utility has deposited first-class mail notice in the United States mail.

(b) The utility shall not disconnect service while a payment schedule is pending appeal or until any appeal involving payment schedules has been determined by the commission.

Subd. 6. **Enforcement.** This section may be enforced pursuant to chapter 216B.

Minnesota license plates go digital

It began in April and will take several years but eventually all Minnesota's 158 types of license plates will be flat, rather than embossed, and produced in a manner that saves time, space, money and a few unpleasant chemicals while it makes the plates easier to read.

The "digital" license plates (DLP) are produced by the Minnesota Department of Corrections using a relatively new process that involves printing the design on flat sheeting. With input from law enforcement, the Department of Public Safety Division of Driver and Vehicle Services redesigned the plates to include black lettering,

which creates higher contrast and greater readability, and a bar code that can be scanned for inventory control and record-keeping.

The digital printing reduces production time since all the graphics on the plate can be printed simultaneously. It also allows faster delivery on specialty plates because they can be printed anytime; the embossed plates require a sequential production process that can't be interrupted to print a special plate.

The thinner, lighter – and still recyclable – aluminum used in the DLP process will require less storage space and reduce postage costs. There's a small environmental advantage, too. The digital printing

process eliminates some of the paints and solvents necessary to produce embossed plates.

Currently, flat plates include the "Loon Critical Habitat" and "Support Our Troops" plates, along with the new "Minnesota Sesquicentennial" plate that became available this month. Anyone renewing plates online or via U.S. Mail is now receiving DLPs and deputy registrars have recently begun issuing the plates for passenger vehicles. This winter, the transition will begin in the remaining plate categories.

For a digital image of the new plate design, go to www.dps.state.mn.us.

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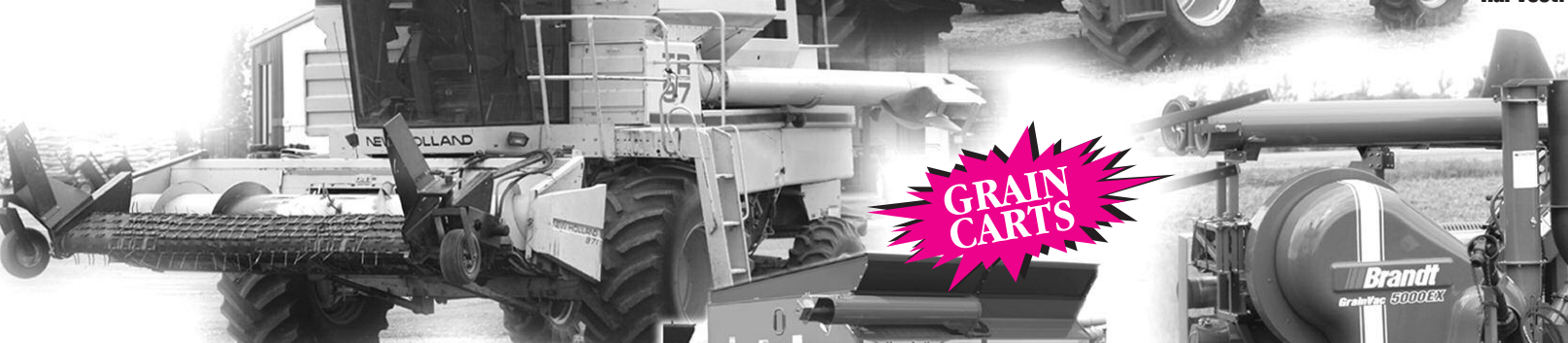


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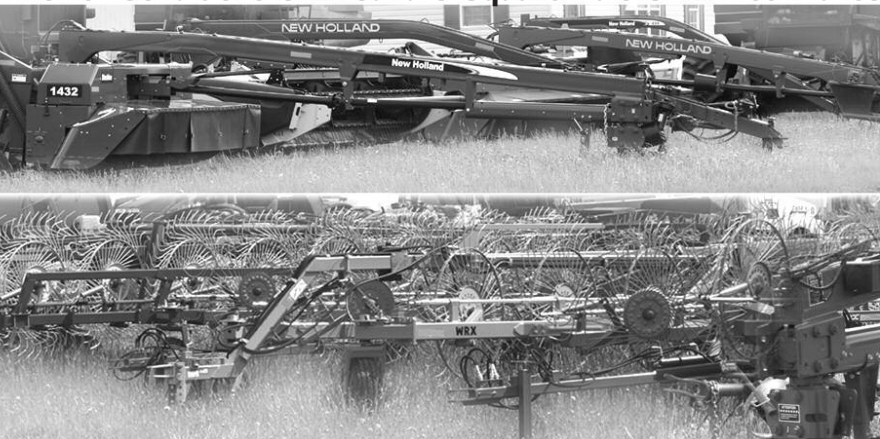
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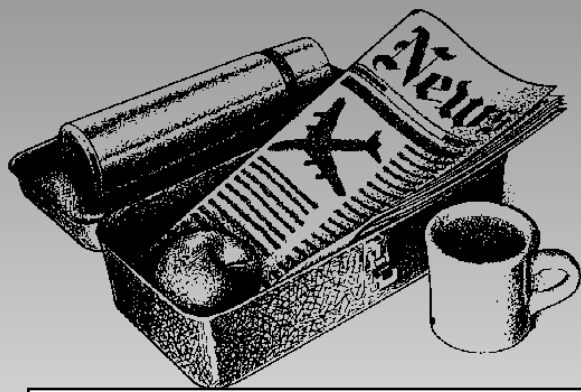


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If you are not currently using “auto-pay,” sign up before October 6.

Understanding the basics of life insurance

If you have ever shopped for life insurance, you know it can be a daunting task. With so many choices - whole life, term life and universal - it is hard to know what type to buy. A little research on the industry basics can help minimize your guesswork.

There are two categories of life insurance: term life and whole life.

Whole life, also known as permanent life, offers various savings and investment options and provides coverage for a lifetime. Premiums are more expensive because they remain fixed throughout the life of the policy and the insurance carrier, inevitably, will payout the benefit.

Whole life plans are more complex but offer flexibility for those who want more protection for their families. Variations of whole life include permanent life, universal life and variable life.

Term life provides coverage for an established amount of time, which is usually between one to 30 years, or during employment with an employer.

Term life is simpler in its plan. It does not accumulate a cash value or offer savings, investments or loan



Photo by Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.

features. Premiums during the life of the policy may remain fixed for a period and gradually increase as the insured ages.

Term life premiums are typically less expensive because the coverage period, in theory, is shorter. At the end of the term, if the insured is still alive, the policy terminates and no benefit is paid.

Term life insurance makes the most sense when you want protec-

tion at the most affordable rate and already have other investments for retirement.

While there are many differences between these two types of insurance, they have one common theme: to provide financial protection in the event of an insured's early death. Life insurance, although only part of your family's financial security plan, is an important decision to make.

Scholarship offered to law enforcement students

Sheriff Mitch Bernstein of Red Lake County announced today the commencement of the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association (MSA) Scholarship Program for 2008.

Bernstein proudly announced that the MSA has established a scholarship fund totaling \$9,000, for the awarding of up to 15 \$600 scholarships for this year.

This is made possible through coordinated efforts of the 87 sheriffs in the state.

Members of the MSA give special recognition to the financial needs of students attending the mandated peace officer skills course or two- or four-year law enforcement degree school.

The policy adopted by the MSA indicated it was their feeling that enforcement of the law in a demo-

cratic society is a complex task. The ability of a peace officer to render effective service responsive to the public's need depends heavily upon job knowledge and skills.

The MSA recognizes the importance of pre-entry training to the accomplishment of these requisites. It also recognizes that some candidates need outside help in meeting the costs of such training, even though they excel academically. To that end, the MSA stands ready to offer financial assistance in the form of these scholarships, as funds will allow.

The scholarship committee, in making its selection of awards, intends to achieve representation from all geographical areas of the state.

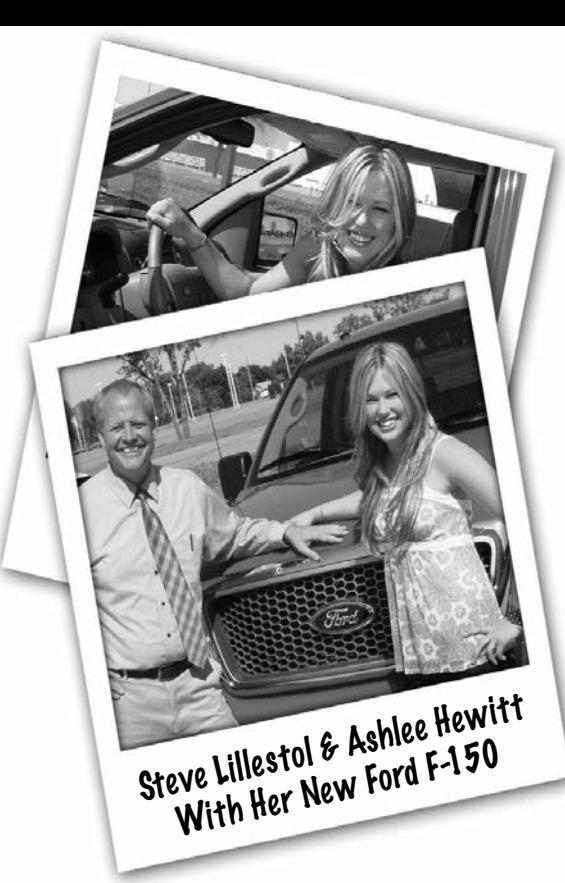
Applications will be received

until Nov. 1 of each year, with scholarships being awarded by Dec. 31 of that year.

Application Scholarships are only available to students currently enrolled in one of the following three categories: Mandated post skills program, in their second year of a two-year law enforcement program or in their third or fourth year of a four-year college criminal justice course. In order to qualify, students must have completed at least one year of a two-year program or two years of a four-year program.

Students meeting this criteria can obtain a scholarship application form and a statement of procedures at the county Sheriff's Office or online at www.mnsheriffs.org.

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