

Nodak Neighbor

September-October 2007

Official Publication of Nodak Electric Cooperative

www.nodakelectric.com

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



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Official Publication of the
Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc.

746-4461 or 800-732-4373

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Editor..... Troy Olson



Help keep your lights on

*Use caution when burning
around power poles*

You know fall is right around the corner when the once green fields have turned to harvest gold. Landowners begin cleaning their property in the fall to get ready for winter, sometimes burning ditches to get rid of the dead grass and weeds, making it easier to keep the roads clear of snow. Sometimes, however, Nodak's poles get damaged because no precautions were taken to protect them.

Replacing a pole can range in price from \$500 to \$2,000 depending on the type of pole and the nature of the installation. A pole's strength is in the shell or outer edge of the pole. If the outside inch is removed, the pole loses

50 percent of its strength and at two inches, the pole would lose 85 percent of its strength. A pole with shell damage not reported could lead to an outage on a cold winter day, and that outage may cause problems for you and other members of your cooperative. Removing the fuel or dead grass around poles is one method of preventing a pole from being burned. Digging or mowing around the pole before burning will also reduce the chance of damaging poles.

Please remember to call Nodak Electric if a pole is damaged. Nodak can then schedule time to repair the pole before an outage occurs.

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On the cover

As autumn approaches, farmers across the Nodak Electric service region are nearing completion of their small grain harvest. According to early ag reports, this year is expected to be a good one for area farmers. *Photo by Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc.*

E-billing

Easy online account access!

If you're interested in learning more information about E-billing, visit our Web site at **nodakelectric.com**. Click on "Programs and Services," and then select "E-bill." After reading all about what E-billing has to offer and you are interested in using the E-bill option, just follow the next few steps:



- Have your Nodak account number ready
- Select highlighted option "Click here to enter E-billing"
- Select "If you are a new user"
- Fill out the appropriate information, name, account number, etc. and select "Submit"

It's that easy and you're on your way to accessing your account. If you have any questions, please feel free to call our offices at 701-746-4461 (toll-free 1-800-732-4373) or e-mail us at nodak@nodakelectric.com.



George Berg
President & CEO

Conserving electricity makes sense

A friend asked me recently if I thought there was a significant movement in the area of energy conservation with respect to electricity. My non-scientific answer was that on average I didn't think there was much being done by the consumer, at least in this part of the country. If I am at all right in this assumption, there are a couple of reasons this may be true.

First, the average cost of electricity for a residential consumer in North Dakota is inexpensive compared to the rest of the country. In 2006, North Dakotans paid an average 6.5¢ per kilowatt-hour compared to 17.6¢ in Massachusetts, 16.3¢ in New York and 13.5¢ in California. Even our close neighbors in Minnesota paid an average 8.14¢ per kilowatt-hour in 2006 – 25 percent more than in North Dakota. When electricity is this cheap, consumers don't have the will to be bothered by something as boring as energy conservation.

A second reason why little is being done in North Dakota to conserve electricity may be that there hasn't been a recent rise in electric rates like other forms of energy. Compared to gasoline, fuel oil, propane and natural gas, electricity prices have been incredibly stable.

Considering the low cost of electricity in North Dakota, we may even ask the question, "Does it make any sense for us to get excited about conserving electricity?" The answer is, yes, it probably does make sense. Even though the economic benefits

are not as great here as in other parts of the country, we are probably making a mistake by not being more aggressive as consumers to conserve electricity. The stable, low electric rates we enjoy will not be here forever.

Based on growth patterns across the country, every utility will need considerably more generation to meet our increasing future demand. Most of our existing generation is more than 25 years old. The new generation will be much more costly and will certainly drive up the cost of electricity for all consumers.

From an economic standpoint, consumers who take action now rather than later will get a jumpstart on saving money. This will give them an early payback on whatever investment they have made. They will also be part of a movement that will help reduce the amount of new generation needed in the future.

There are, of course, many ways to conserve energy, and information is readily available on the Internet. The simplest and most effective action for a homeowner is to replace existing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL). The CFL bulb uses roughly 25 percent as much electricity as a comparable

incandescent light bulb. CFL light bulbs have become so reasonably priced that the homeowner actually saves on the cost of the bulb, as well as the energy savings. A CFL bulb may cost five times that of an incandescent light bulb, but it will last 10 times longer.



We are fortunate we don't have the economic stimulus for conservation that exists in many states with extremely high electric rates. This shouldn't be a reason to be complacent. We will still do ourselves a favor if we start now to conserve our use of electricity, as well as any other form of energy.



Watch out for power lines.	Refuel after equipment has cooled.
Before operating, check behind the combine and around the wheels for obstacles and children.	Keep a fully charged, all-purpose fire extinguisher on any machine with an engine.
Get off the machine to check clearance when space is limited.	Maintain a first-aid kit near the operator's platform.
Avoid excessive speed.	Turn off machines and put the keys in your pocket before making adjustments or repairs.

Global warming

The rest of the story

By David Loer, President & CEO
Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc.

The question of global warming (or cooling) has been around for a long time, but most prevalent since 1987 when a NASA employee testified before Congress that he felt carbon dioxide is causing the Earth to warm and the associated climate change will create havoc with our Earth.

Since that time there has been much debate between scientists as to the real story associated with carbon dioxide emissions and their role in warming the planet. Environmental organizations and the media have been especially vocal in their promotion of man-emitted carbon dioxide causing the Earth great harm through the warming process.

Let's face it. The global warming advocates are winning this issue at the present time. The media, with environmental organization input, has been promoting the idea that carbon dioxide, emitted by sources such as coal-fired power plants, needs to be reduced.

The U.S. government spends approximately \$4 billion each year

in research grants to individuals and organizations to study this important issue. Unfortunately, most of the money goes to researchers who are open advocates that man-emitted carbon dioxide is a major problem. The skeptics are ignored or ridiculed.

Thankfully, there are still very knowledgeable people who are skeptical that the very small percentage of the world's CO₂ emissions from man-made sources will cause major climate changes. Only about 4 percent of the world's carbon dioxide emissions are coming from man-made sources. These include coal-fired power plants, industrial plants and cars, each about one-third of the 4 percent.

Beyond that fact, there are several other facts leading to many people believing that carbon dioxide emissions are really not a major problem in the world.

Cause and effect?

One of these little publicized facts is the time relationship between carbon dioxide and global temperature

changes. While the alarmists would have us assume that increases in atmospheric CO₂ precede and cause increases in global temperature, scientific data says the exact opposite.

Historical data taken from polar ice core samples, for example, indicate that increases in temperature have preceded increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide by several hundred years. The global warming advocates choose to ignore this phenomenon by simply stating the relationship between atmospheric CO₂ and temperature is "complex."

This fascinating discovery should be a major breakthrough in determining whether carbon dioxide increases can or could cause the temperature to increase. Whether it will or not remains to be seen, but many believe that this is evidence that needs to enter the discussion of global warming.

Another issue that the global warming worriers can take no comfort from is the Antarctic data. During the past 30 years atmospheric CO₂ has increased by about 15 percent from nearly 330 ppm to just more than 370 ppm.

But the Antarctic temperature trend for that period indicates a slight cooling rather than warming. This observation contrasts sharply with the relative steep Antarctic warming observed from 1949 to 1974, which was accompanied by a much more modest increase in greenhouse gas concentrations.

The bottom line on global warming is that we really do not know the complexities of the world's climate.

Until we know more, it would seem unwise for our society to make expensive efforts to reduce our CO₂ emissions.

Nodak Electric board considers standards

Nodak Electric Cooperative held a hearing on June 12 to receive evidence regarding five federal standards for consideration under Title 1 of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978, as amended by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, Subtitle E. The five standards, which were considered by the board following the testimony of the applicant and the sole intervener were: net metering; fuel source diversity; fossil fuel generation; time-based metering and communications standard; and interconnection standard.

The findings, determinations and conclusions are available upon request at the Nodak Electric Cooperative headquarters in Grand Forks, N.D., or at www.nodakelectric.com under the EPA 2005 tab in the center of the home page. This document explains each standard and the board's decision regarding each of them.

AMR

AUTOMATIC METER READING

update

All meters on the Nodak Electric Cooperative system are being replaced with new meters that are fitted with an automatic meter reading module. As of Aug. 21, 2007, there have been about 1,200 meters changed throughout the service area. Don't be alarmed when your meter is changed – it is likely part of the installation process.

If you read your own meter, we ask that you keep doing so even if your meter is replaced because the system is not operational at



this time. Each member will be notified through the billing statement when readings are no longer needed. The reading boxes will also be removed from your billing statement at that time.

The substation equipment installation is scheduled to begin in September at a few substations near Grand Forks. Once the communication link is established from the headquarters to these first substations, the system will be initialized and the rest of the substations will follow. As each substation is ready for operation, the meter reading will be done remotely.

It is expected to take approximately two years to complete this process. There will be updates periodically as the project moves forward. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call us at 1-800-732-4373.

Guest Editorial



Dennis Hill

RUS financing needed for future generation

North Dakota's electric cooperatives are asking Congress to oppose a change the Bush Administration has proposed in its 2008 federal budget. The budget sent to Congress by the President would prohibit the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, from making loans or loan guarantees to build coal or nuclear-powered generation plants in the future.

This change, in our view, is an unacceptable departure from the mission and purpose of RUS, and comes at a time when this nation is working hard to reduce its dependence on imported energy.

Until this proposed change, the nation's electric cooperatives have counted on RUS as their primary source of capital to build or replace the poles, lines, substations and power plants needed to ensure rural America a reliable, affordable source of electric power. RUS makes this capital available through means-tested loans or loan guarantees to distribution co-ops, which sell power at retail to their consumer-owners, and generation and transmission (G&T) co-ops, which own and operate the power plants and high-voltage transmission lines.

Without the availability of RUS financing for coal generation, new coal projects will cost millions of dollars more in extra financing charges. This comes at a time when it's estimated that electric cooperatives across the nation need to invest more than \$40 billion in new power plants, transmission and other electric infrastructure to meet the increasing electricity demand during the next 10 years.

North Dakota's G&Ts are expected to invest several billion dollars during the next 15 years in new coal, natural gas and wind generation in North Dakota and surrounding states. That's because demand for electric power in our region is rising quickly, driven mostly by increased domestic oil and gas exploration, and refining and renewable energy development. And in addition to coal, these sources of energy were identified by President Bush in his State of the Union address as key domestic resources to be developed to reduce our overall dependence on foreign energy imports.

This new investment would come on top of the existing investment made by G&T cooperatives in North Dakota. The G&Ts operating here have invested nearly \$5 billion in electric generation and coal conversion facilities, which currently use about 90 percent of the lignite coal mined in North Dakota. While there is increasing concern that burning coal contributes to global climate change, nearly all the experts agree that coal-based generation will be an important part of our future electricity supply, made more expensive by investments in clean coal and carbon sequestration technologies that will be increasingly deployed over the next decade and more. Therefore, now is not the time to change the ground rules for RUS financing of new electric generation. RUS has historically been a "fuel neutral" source of capital for electric cooperatives and it should remain so.

At this critical time, we believe the federal government should maintain its partnership with our nation's electric cooperatives to help guarantee rural America's energy future and our nation's energy security.

Dennis Hill, editor-in-chief of North Dakota LIVING, is executive vice president and general manager of the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, headquartered in Mandan, N.D.

Attention Nodak Electric members:



**Order North Dakota LIVING
by calling the Nodak Electric office:**

**701-746-4461 or
800-732-4373**

- *North Dakota LIVING* is the very popular monthly magazine circulated by electric cooperatives across our state. *North Dakota LIVING* is the modern edition of the "REC Magazine" that has been a part of North Dakota's fabric for 53 years.

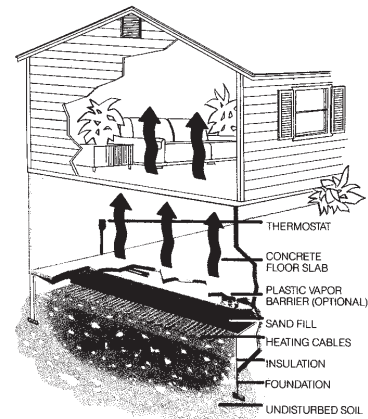
- Nodak Electric members who order *North Dakota LIVING* will see their first copy in just a few weeks. The cost to Nodak Electric members for *North Dakota LIVING* is currently 75 cents per issue. The office will add this to the member's monthly electric bill from the co-op.
- That's right, for just 75 cents a month you will get great insights into the wonderful North Dakota quality of life, will visit memorable people and will see how our cooperatives are building a better North Dakota.
- *North Dakota LIVING* is a great companion to the news and information in our "Nodak Neighbor," the official member publication of Nodak Electric.

Order North Dakota LIVING today! Call: 701-746-4461 or 800-732-4373.

Underfloor heating cable repair service

If your floor heating cable is not working properly, call our Energy Services Department at 701-746-4461 or 1-800-732-4373. With more than 15 years of cable repair experience, Larry can diagnose and repair most systems and return them to service with minimal disruption to the slab.

Call today for more details on how we can help you get ready for the upcoming heating season.



Operation Round Up® holds quarterly meeting

The Operation Round Up® board held their regular quarterly meeting on Thursday, July 12, at the headquarters building of Nodak Electric Cooperative. John Vaagene, board chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. with directors Bruce Ellertson, Richard Lieberg, Maynard Messer, Hugh Ralston and Roger Winjue attending. Also present were Nodak Electric's Board Chairman Doug Lund, as well as Duane Hafner and Troy Olson from the Nodak staff.

The board reviewed the financial report and considered all of the applications that had been received. Applicants who were granted funding are listed at right.

The next meeting of the Operation Round Up board will be held Oct. 11 at the Nodak Electric Cooperative headquarters in Grand Forks, N.D. We encourage applicants to have their application submitted at least one week ahead of time so it can be sent out to the Round Up board for their review prior to the meeting. If you know of an organization or individual that has a need, have them request an application by calling Nodak Electric at 1-800-732-4373.

Cavalier Public School	\$ 250
Aneta Homes, Inc.	1,000
Pete Azure	700
Emerado Volunteer Fire Dept.	500
Craig Conner	1,000
Healthy Families	1,000
Ben Hylden	2,000
Doug Langerud	500
Ronald Lerud	500
Francine McClendon	500
Michigan Area Ambulance Service.	1,000
Roberta Milford	500
Anna Momerak	500
Nelson County Emergency Management. . .	1,000
Walsh County Transportation Program . . .	500
Bre Ann Ziegelmann	2,000
Total	\$13,450

Are you ready for the heating season?



Cold, blustery days. Below zero temperatures. A warm, cozy house. As autumn settles in across the Minnkota Power Cooperative service region in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota, now is the time to begin preparations for this winter's load control season.

"Nodak encourages all of our off-peak customers to have a reliable, automatic dual fuel heating system in place and ready for use," says Troy Olson, energy services manager for Nodak Electric Cooperative. "This makes the switch to your backup system relatively transparent when load control occurs."

System checklist

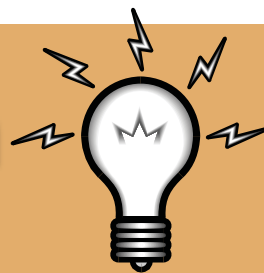
To ensure your total comfort this winter, consider the following questions concerning your backup heating system:

- ✓ **Is your system sized appropriately to heat your entire home or business?**
- ✓ **Does it maintain an adequate comfort level?**
- ✓ **Is it reliable?**
- ✓ **Is it fully automatic?**

Another important action off-peak customers can take now is to have their propane or fuel oil tank filled during the "off season." Prices for fuels such as propane and fuel oil typically rise as demand increases during the wintertime, escalating home heating costs. To avoid having to pay these high winter fuel prices, off-peak customers should get their tanks filled before the beginning of the heating season.

If you have any questions about Nodak's off-peak heating program, call our energy services department at 701-746-4461 or 800-732-4373.

Power interruption checklist



While Nodak Electric Cooperative hopes you or your business never have to experience a power outage, the following information will help you cope with an outage if one should occur. Keep a power outage kit on hand, and make sure you, your family members, and employees know where your "power outage" kit is located. Kit items should include:

- Nodak Electric Cooperative telephone number
- Flashlight with fresh batteries
- Matches
- Candles
- Spare fuses
- Portable radio with fresh batteries

Things to do when an outage occurs

- ✓ **STAY AWAY FROM DOWNED POWER LINES** and broken utility poles. Please note the location of the downed line or pole and call Nodak immediately. Even lines that look harmless can be dangerous.
- ✓ Check your breakers and the yard pole disconnect switch to determine if it has tripped off due to a power overload. If fuses or breakers are okay, call Nodak Electric Cooperative 746-4461 or 800-732-4373. A 24-hour dispatch service will answer your call after normal working hours.
- ✓ Check with your neighbors to determine if they are also without service. Even if your neighbors' lights are on, don't hesitate to call Nodak.
- ✓ Turn off all electrical appliances that were on, especially air conditioners or electric heating. However, you will want to leave a light on so you will know when your power has been restored.
- ✓ Turn on your portable radio and listen for messages from Nodak Electric. This will occur only when there has been a major planned outage or catastrophic conditions.
- ✓ Leave doors closed on refrigerators and freezers as much as possible during outages. Food will keep much longer if the doors are left closed.
- ✓ If any member of your family is on a life-support system, please notify Nodak today so their name and address can be placed on a priority service list.



You have the power to make a difference.

Our communities are growing
and so is our demand for electricity.
We are all affected by the rising cost of energy.
We are all in this together.
We are doing our part.

And you can do your part, too.

Conserving electricity today will help
reduce the need for new generation in the future.
Small changes can make a big difference.
Start by changing your light bulbs
to make your home more energy-efficient.
Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) are 75 percent
more energy-efficient than conventional light bulbs.
Contact Nodak Electric for more energy-saving tips.

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