

Current Matters

Committed to improving the quality of life of our members

January 2010
Vol. 2 Issue 1



Nobles Cooperative
Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Working together to save together

Flip a switch. Lower the blinds. Insulate your attic. Lower the temperature on your thermostat. These sound like simple tasks. Take all of these steps around your home or business and you can rack up big savings.

Saving money through energy-efficiency highlights a new national communications campaign recently launched by Touchstone Energy Cooperatives. “Together We Save” is the theme integrated in the campaign message built on the premise that small changes in member behavior can help co-ops deliver efficient, reliable and affordable energy. While the potential economic benefit to members will inspire them to make those changes.

Be sure to visit TogetherWeSave.com to learn more. You will find many ways to lower your electric bill. This website offers many small changes in behavior that can add up to real savings. Members will easily learn what they can do and the immediate results of those actions.

The site features:

- A room by room energy-saving virtual home tour
- Interactive energy-saving applications
- Touchstone Energy TV videos
- A calculator to estimate yearly savings

“Together We Save” is simple and straight to the point. It is also the focus at Nobles Cooperative Electric (NCE) as we work to keep electricity reliable and affordable for our members.

It may appear odd to make a pitch to sell less electricity, but it isn’t a new concept to NCE. Our first priority is meeting the needs of our member-owners. We are working together to save together.

Now it is your turn to visit TogetherWeSave.com and make some conservation improvements to share in the savings.

Touchstone Energy is a national group of 680 local, member-owned electric cooperatives in 46 states delivering power and energy solutions to more than 40 million members.



Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

2 Manager’s message

3 Youth Tour is a trip of a lifetime

4 Recognition given to employees and directors

Energy saving tip

Federal tax credits are available for home energy efficiency improvements, including windows, doors, water heaters and HVAC equipment for existing homes. For details, visit energystar.gov/taxcredits.

Source: *Energy Star*

Mark your calendar

Jan. 18 ... Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Feb. 1 Read your meter

Feb. 10 Electric bills due

Billing and payment options

Pay in person

Make your payment in the Slayton or Worthington office.

Pay by mail

Envelopes are provided for your convenience in mailing payments.

Auto Pay

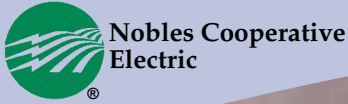
Your electric bill can be automatically deducted from your bank account.

Even Pay

Consistent monthly payments eliminating the high and low months.

Easy 2 Pay

Free online bill service allows you to view your bill, submit your meter readings and/or pay your bill.



**A word from your
General Manager
by Richard 'Rick' Burud**

Annual Meeting approaches

The board of directors have set March 27 at the Worthington High School for the Annual Meeting of the cooperative's membership. The Nominating Committee is out and about seeking candidates for Districts 3 and 5. Be sure to plan on attending. This year's attendance gift is a nice, bright, 25-foot extension cord.

CO₂ legislation

The largest single issue facing your cooperative is the legislative policy being developed in Washington, D.C. on global warming and how it will effect your electric bill. Be sure to be educated on this topic and give your comments to our two United States Senators. Join the 457,000 American consumers who have asked their elected officials tough questions about our energy future. Go to www.ourenergymn.coop to make your voice heard.



Our Energy, Our Future
A Dialogue With America



Usage

NCE has received our bill for purchased power and it is over budget by more than three million kilowatt-hours. It is the largest bill we've ever received. The bad news is that this translates into larger electric bills for the members who used record levels during November. This high usage is very understandable due to the large amount of corn and soybean drying. The good news is that the yields overall seem to be very good.

New Year's greetings

As we welcome 2010, all of us at Nobles Cooperative Electric would like to wish you and your family a prosperous and joyous new year.



How much energy do I use? And how can I use less?

Join NCE for an informative Minnesota Brighter Ideas webcast that will help you identify areas in your home where you are wasting energy. Learn how you can use less energy and make your home more healthy and efficient.

Minnesotans continue to use more electricity to enrich their lives — whether it's to power new electronics in homes to the kids leaving the lights on. The 30-minute webcast will give you a chance to learn where you may be wasting energy

Statement of nondiscrimination

Nobles Cooperative Electric is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call toll free 866-632-9992 (voice) or 800-877-8339 (TDD) or 866-377-8642 (relay voice users). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

while also showing some tips and tricks you can take right away to reduce your electricity usage. Energy experts from NCE's wholesale power provider, Great River Energy, will also answer your questions via the webcast's chat function.

The webcast will take place at 12 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Tuesday, February 9, at <http://MNBrighterIdeas.Webex.com>. (Please note there is NOT a www in the address).

Additional information on how you can save energy today can be found at www.MNBrighterIdeas.com.

High school students — win a free trip to Washington, D.C.

Every year NCE and electric co-ops from across the country sponsor an essay and interview contest to select a delegate to attend the annual Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. These high school students represent their local electric co-op on a whirlwind tour of the Nation's Capitol. Nearly 1,500 students get an inside look at our national government and a tour of the city. Tours often include the National Cathedral, Arlington National Cemetery, the war memorials, Smithsonian museums, a theater performance, boat ride on the Potomac and a trip to Capitol Hill. Best of all, you have the opportunity to meet students from across the United States.

NCE awards one trip to Washington, D.C. Second and third place receives \$150 and \$100 respectively. The first 15 applicants receive a \$20 gift certificate to amazon.com. The deadline is February 26.

To enter you must be a freshman, sophomore or junior and follow these two steps to win a trip of a lifetime!

1. Write a 300-word essay on an energy-related topic and complete the two-page application. These are available from a school counselor, calling NCE or printing one from our website at www.noblesce.coop.

2. Five finalists are selected for a 15-minute interview in March at NCE's Worthington office, with an award ceremony following the interviews.



W WILDBLUE DELIVERS

- RELIABILITY.
- AFFORDABILITY.**
- AVAILABILITY.
- HIGH-SPEED.
- "ALWAYS ON" ACCESS.

Only \$99 with free installation

Meeting your Internet needs

Contact us today. When your family needs affordable high-speed Internet, NCE delivers.

Controlling costs at your cooperative during uncertain times

Budgeting lies at the foundation of every financial plan. It doesn't matter if you're living paycheck to paycheck or earning six-figures a year, you need to know where your money is going if you want to have a handle on your finances.

Electric cooperatives of today face extraordinary challenges. Boards and managers must address the potential impacts of wholesale rate increases, the emergence of new technologies, the growth of member demands for service and whether they wish to offer diversified services. At the same time they need to address new issues, while continuing to provide competitively priced electric service

and maintaining the loyalty and support of their members. The number and complexity of the issues can be overwhelming with all the variables involved, including the potential federal CO₂ cap and trade bill.

Our 2010 budget reflects our determination to provide reliable electricity as economically as possible, amid a volatile economy and rising power costs.

NCE is no different than our members. To serve our membership with reliable electricity, we operate under an annual operating budget. NCE's staff develops annual work plans and budgets that address every aspect of the cooperative business.

Your cooperative is operating in the conservation mode too. We are working to find ways to save money and manage expected rate increases. We've been working on our office to make it more energy-efficient by installing a ground source heat pump and energy-efficient lighting. NCE's directors and employees are planning for the future and being proactive in their approach through budgeting, strategic planning sessions and listening to you and your needs.

We are all in this together, building on our foundation for a better future — dedicated to serving your best interests.

Employees and directors recognized for 110 years of service combined



Years of service awards were recently presented to NCE employees and directors: Journeyman Lineman Dan Bell (25 years), Customer Service Representative Carla Frisvold (25 years), Director Henry Hanson (35 years), Data Processing Clerk Brenda Schroeder (10 years) and Director Dick Ruiter (10 years). Missing from photo: Journeyman Lineman Ryan Loomans (5 years).

Agricultural and industrial electric tax exemption

Cooperative members who use electricity for agricultural or industrial production may be able to get a sales tax exemption.

To claim exemption you must provide NCE with a completed Form ST-3, Certificate of Exemption.

If you have any questions, please call our office. You may also stop by and pick up an application.

Snowmobilers beware!

When you are snowmobiling, be aware of obstacles along right-of-ways. NCE has poles, guy wires and metal enclosures installed on thousands of miles of right-of-ways in our service area. Guy wires need special attention. They can be on several sides of a pole and difficult to see. Be sure to be safe and check with property-owners before snowmobiling.

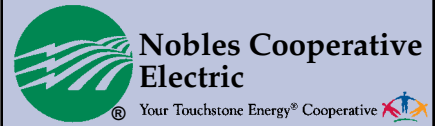
Country Cupboard Cranberry Nut Muffins

2 c. all-purpose flour
3/4 c. packed brown sugar
2 tsp. baking powder
2 eggs
2/3 c. orange juice
1/3 c. vegetable oil
1 c. cranberries coarsely chopped
1 c. chopped nuts

In a large bowl, combine flour, brown sugar and baking powder. In another bowl beat eggs. Add orange juice and oil. Stir into the dry ingredients just until moistened (batter will be lumpy). Fold in cranberries and nuts. Spoon into 12 paper-lined muffin cups. (Cups will be almost full.) Bake at 375 degrees for 20 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from pan to cool.

Send your favorite **pineapple** recipe to Nobles Cooperative Electric, ATTN: Tracey, P.O. Box 788, Worthington, MN 56187-0788. Entries must include your name, address, telephone number and NCE's location number. All entries must be received by February 16. The winning recipe will be featured in the next edition of *Current Matters* and the winner will receive a **\$10 credit** on their electric bill.

Donna Hieronimus
Rushmore



Official monthly publication

Main office

22636 U.S. Hwy. 59, P.O. Box 788
Worthington, MN 56187-0788
Phone: 507-372-7331
Fax: 507-372-5148

Satellite office

1505 20th Street, P.O. Box 56
Slayton, MN 56172-0056
Phone: 507-836-6107

Website

www.noblesce.coop

E-mail address

nce@noblesce.com

Office hours

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday

24-Hour outage service

800-776-0517

Gopher State One-Call

800-252-1166

WildBlue tech support

888-326-4289

Electrical inspectors

Murray County
Randal Maha - 507-274-5261
Nobles County
Scott Preuss - 507-449-8870

General Manager

Richard G. Burud

Board of Directors

Henry Hanson, President - 483-2417
Richard Greve, V. President - 376-5026
Lee York, Sec./Treas. - 879-3497
David Clarke, Director - 425-2646
Dick Ruiter, Director - 443-5891
Ronald Schwartau, Director - 734-3052
Gary Sieve, Director - 926-5455