



V & M benefits from energy-efficiency improvement

Nobles Cooperative Electric (NCE) has a rebate program tailored specifically to commercial, industrial or agricultural members. This program makes it possible for businesses to purchase energy-efficient motors, lighting, refrigeration, space heating, water heating and other state of the art technologies.

Verlyn Ruiter and his son, Chad, owners of V & M Grocery and Locker, Leota, realized that small changes can mean big energy savings. They identified a major energy efficiency opportunity earlier this year when they decided to replace their 22 year old electric smoker with a newer model.

NCE was there when V & M purchased their first smoker and there 22 years later when their replacement came.

The new smoker's generator uses 17 times less electricity. It is controlled by a microprocessor eliminating human error and can be run at night using off-peak electricity. It will save the locker 7.92 kW in demand savings, 23,744 kWh savings annually, plus the cooperative kicked in a sizable rebate.

V & M depends on NCE for reli-



Verlyn Ruiter with his first 700 lb. capacity electric smoker in 1988.

able electricity and helpful advice. We are proud to have V & M as members of our cooperative, enhancing the life of our rural communities.

Give NCE a call today and let us help you identify major energy efficiency opportunities in your business.

Last year your Touchstone Energy Cooperative spent more than \$97,500 helping members conserve over 1,207,090 kWh of electricity. We continue to stress the importance of energy efficiency, especially with anticipated increases in the cost of wholesale electricity. Conserving energy benefits all NCE members and the entire system, while improving the quality of our environment.

Cover photo: V & M Grocery and Locker's Verlyn Ruiter with his new electric smoker.

Energy saving tip

Keeping your tires properly inflated improves gas mileage for the average vehicle by around three percent, saving up to 20 gallons of gasoline per year.

Source: Alliance to Save Energy

Mark your calendar

- Sept. 23.....Autumn begins
- Oct. 1.....Read your meter
- Oct. 11.....Columbus Day
- Oct. 12.....Electric bills due

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2 Manager's message

3 Pharmacy discounts with Co-op Connections

4 Always call before you dig



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

Article and Bylaw amendments to be voted on by membership

The Board of Directors and legal council, Andy Hagemann, received and recommended the membership adopt the revised Articles and Bylaws. Our attorney led the Board's discussion and helped draft changes to these two documents. Neither document had been reviewed completely in their entirety or updated for years.

Each member will receive a copy of the Articles and Bylaws with the proposed changes prior to the Annual Meeting. Mr. Hagemann will also highlight these with the membership prior to the vote at the Annual Meeting on March 26. If you have any specific questions, you can direct them to me at our office.

Automatic Meter Reading (AMR)

More than 500 meters have been installed on seasonal accounts. We are beginning to install them on large power meters we read monthly. If all goes as expected, next year the entire membership will have AMR meters installed.

The benefits of AMR go way beyond just reading your meter. As the



Save on ENERGY STAR® rated appliances from September 1–October 31.

Save energy, save water and save money. This special rebate offer is available at any retailer for the purchase of any ENERGY STAR refrigerator or clothes washer. Just ask us for the rebate form to submit with your sales receipt.

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mnbrighterideas.com

ANOTHER BRIGHT IDEA FROM NOBLES COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

system becomes deployed, much more information will be forthcoming.

Cooperative financial update

I'll give you some statistics on our cooperative's financial condition after the first six months of 2010:

- Sales**
1,511,152 kWh increase
- Demand**
319 kW increase
- Revenue**
\$421,101 increase
- Margins**
\$132,912 increase
- Total plant investment**
\$39,312,978; up \$1,925,611 from last year
- Equity**
47.51% up from 44.68% last year

As you can see, your cooperative is operating in a very strong condition. It appears no rate increase will be necessary for our cooperative, other than our power cost adjustment (PCA). The PCA will increase as our supplemental power supplier, Great River Energy, has announced they expect a three to four percent increase in 2011.

Do you need an electrical inspector?

This question seems to come up many times throughout the year. The fact of the matter is that Minnesota's 1950's law has required and enforced electrical inspections statewide. However, many people don't realize this until they try to sell or refinance their property. Generally, Minnesota law requires all electrical work to be performed by licensed, bonded and insured electrical contractors and their employees. Homeowners, with strict limitations, are exempt from licensing, but not from inspection. A separate request for an electrical inspection form with the required fees must be submitted at or before the commencement of any electrical installation. If you have had electrical circuits added, extended or altered you should have had a visit from your local electrical inspector. To find out more about the requirements for electrical inspections visit: www.dli.mn.gov. Remember, electrical safety in Minnesota does not happen by accident.

Understanding the Cold Weather Rule

An electric cooperative utility must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a home between October 15 and April 15, if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit when all of the following conditions are met:

1. The member has requested a utility shutoff protection form provided by the utility. A member receiving energy assistance has demonstrated this inability.

2. The member's household income is at or below 50 percent of the state median income;

3. Verification of income may be conducted by the local energy assistance provider or the utility, unless the member 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 as mentioned above;

4. A member whose account is current for the billing period immediately prior to October 15 or who, at any time, enters into a payment schedule that considers the financial resources of the household and is reasonably current with payments under the schedule; and

5. The member receives referrals to energy assistance programs, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce the member's energy bills.

Before disconnecting service to a residential member between October 15 and April 15, a municipal utility or electric cooperative association must provide the following information to a member: a notice of the proposed disconnection, a statement with the member's rights and

responsibilities, a list of local energy assistance providers, an income verification form, and a statement explaining available time-payment plans and other options to secure continued utility service.

These are the restrictions for disconnection:

1. If a member must be involuntarily disconnected between October 15 and April 15 for failure to comply with residential disconnection provisions, it must not occur on a Friday or the day before a holiday. In addition, the disconnection must not occur until at least 20 days after the notice required, as previously listed, was mailed to the member or 15 days after the notice was personally delivered to the home.

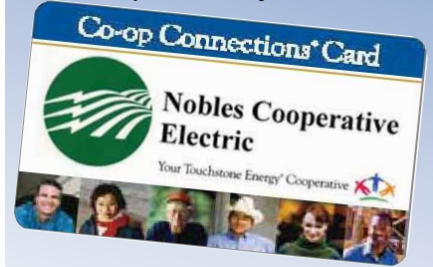
2. If a member does not respond to a disconnect notice, the member must not be disconnected until the utility investigates whether the residence is occupied. If occupied, the utility must immediately inform the occupant of the provisions of this section. If the unit is unoccupied, the utility must give seven days written notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy assistance provider before making a disconnection.

3. If, prior to disconnection, a member 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.

Emergency energy assistance

Murray County	507-836-6144
Nobles County	507-295-5213
SW MN Opportunity Council	507-376-4195

Use your Co-op Connections card for pharmacy discounts



This month when you receive your Co-op Connections card, be sure to put this money-saving card of value in your wallet.

One of the most valuable features of the Co-op Connections card is the pharmacy discount. While it's not insurance, the discount can deliver savings of 10 to 60 percent on prescription drugs. The logo and information on the back of your card is recognized at more than 60,000 national, regional and local pharmacies.



The pharmacy discount has been widely used by cooperatives that are members of Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, resulting in combined savings of nearly \$20.4 million on prescriptions.

As a Touchstone Energy Cooperative member, NCE strives to serve you according to four core values: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. Our Co-op Connections card program is one of the ways we live up to those values.

Smart digging means calling 811 before each job

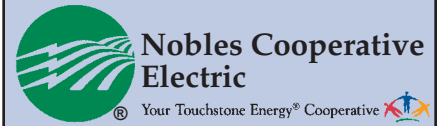
Building a deck? Planting a tree? Installing a mailbox? 811 is the new number you should call before you begin any digging project.

A new, federally-mandated national "Call Before You Dig" number, 811 was created to help protect you from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines while working on digging projects. People digging often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked due to concerns about project delays, costs and previous calls about other projects. These assumptions can be life-threatening. The depth of utility lines varies and there may be multiple utility lines in a common area. Digging without calling can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm you and those around you and potentially result in fines and repair costs. Calling 811 before every digging job gets your underground utility lines marked for free and helps prevent undesired consequences.

When you call please be prepared with the following information: your name, home phone number, when you plan to have work begin, how many days the digging will take place, type of work you will be doing, county and township where the work will be done, and the address or township range/section where the work will be done.

811 will not replace your local one call number. When you call 811, you'll be routed to the local Gopher State One Call center, where they will lead you step by step through the process and answer questions. With more than 62 local one call numbers across the country, 811 eliminates the confusion of multiple "Call Before You Dig" numbers by providing one national number you can call to get your lines marked.

Source: *Common Ground Alliance (CGA)*



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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 or 811

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

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

Country Cupboard Low-Cholesterol Tomato Soup

Robin Gehl
Dundee

2 c. sliced carrots	4 c. tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1 c. chopped celery	4 tsp. sugar
1 sm. onion, finely chopped	1/2 tsp. curry powder
1/2 c. chopped green pepper	1/2 tsp. salt, optional
1/4 c. butter or margarine	1/4 tsp. pepper
4 1/2 c. chicken broth	1/4 c. all-purpose flour

In a Dutch oven, saute carrots, celery, onion and green pepper in butter. Add four cups broth, tomatoes, sugar, curry powder, salt and pepper. Boil, then simmer for 20 minutes. Combine flour and remaining broth until smooth. Gradually add to soup. Bring to a boil, cook and stir for two minutes. Yields 9 servings (about 2 quarts).

Send your favorite **peanut butter 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 September 14. 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.