



Snow and ice storms are an inevitable part of living in *Minnesnowta*

Most Minnesotans, through years of experience and practice, develop a knowledge and understanding about winter weather conditions. We know how to dress, drive and continue to be active outdoors. Minnesotans continue to live, work and play just like any other time of the year. However, accidents, injuries and property damage still occur no matter how many precautions we take. Even though snow and ice storms are inevitable, there are things we can do to stay safe and warm.

- Never touch a fallen power line. Assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged and report them immediately.

- In the event of an outage, an alternate heating source may be used but with extreme caution.

- Plan to stay in an area of the home where the alternate source is located and make sure it is properly vented.

- Be sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working.

- Keep your children and pets away from space heaters.

- When using a kerosene heater, keep a door open to the rest of the

house or open a window slightly.

- Have your fireplace chimney and flue inspected each year and cleaned if needed.

- When blowing snow, be aware of the cooperative's padmount equipment that may be snow covered.

Ice dams can also occur after a heavy snowfall and several days of freezing temperatures causing property damage. They occur when warm air inside your home leaks into the attic and warms the underside of the roof causing snow and ice on the roof to melt. An ice dam can cause damage to the roof, which results in water leaks inside and water spots on the ceiling under the roof damage. If you experience icicles or ice dams, be sure to seal any air leaks in your attic to stop the warm air leakage and provide adequate attic ventilation. After you've made these changes and you still are having problems, hire a contractor who specializes in air sealing for an in-home evaluation.

Snow and ice are part of living in *Minnesnowta*, just like hockey, ice fishing, snowmobiling, sledding and beautiful, white blankets of snow!

Energy saving tip

Use your microwave for cooking whenever possible. They use 50 to 65 percent less energy than conventional ovens and do not heat up your house in the summer. However, conventional ovens may be more appropriate for larger size items when cooking time is increased.

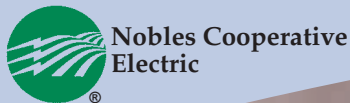
Source: *Touchstone Energy Cooperatives*

Mark your calendar

Feb. 12	Abraham Lincoln's Day
Feb. 14	Valentine's Day
Feb. 15	President's Day
Feb. 17	Ash Wednesday
Mar. 1	Read your meter
Mar. 10	Electric bills due



For emergency response at your fingertips and peace-of-mind, give us a call!



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

Christmas in the dark

Due to transmission outages at Xcel's Tracy Substation, many Murray County members were in the dark Christmas Eve. Since Nobles Cooperative Electric (NCE) does not have any control over this transmission line, we waited until Xcel could safely put it back in service. Here is the sequence of events on December 24 and 25:

- 1:56 p.m. - A momentary outage occurred at the Lake Sarah, Currie, Slayton, Lake Wilson and Chandler substations.
- 2:03 p.m. - A severe winter storm with ice and snow moved into the area and caused a fault 26 miles from Tracy. This resulted in a sustained outage to Lake Sarah, Currie, Slayton, Lake Wilson and Chandler.
- 2:10 p.m. - Xcel was able to restore.
- 2:12 p.m. - The line tripped again and stayed out.
- 2:47 p.m. - After several failed attempts, Xcel was able to restore Lake Sarah, Currie and Slayton after a 25 minute outage. Xcel crews used hot sticks to knock ice and frost off the line between Xcel West Slayton and Xcel Hadley.

Phone number updates help your cooperative in outage situations

NCE and our after-hours call center use your phone number as a way to verify and identify who is calling. Your number also expedites our outage management system and allows us to service your outages in a timely manner. Help us keep our records up-to-date and let us know if you have changed your phone number. Please advise us of any changes by using this form, e-mailing or visiting our website.

Name: _____

Location or Member Number: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

- 3:09 p.m. - Lake Wilson and Chandler were restored after a 57 minute outage.
- 4:43 p.m. - The line tripped again and stayed out. Xcel dispatched trouble crews from Minneapolis to Tracy to bypass the breaker.
- 5:50 p.m. - Xcel was able to restore Lake Wilson and Chandler.
- December 25, 6:42 a.m. - Lake Sarah, Currie and Slayton were restored after a 13 hour and 59 minute outage.

We would like to extend our appreciation for all of the thank you notes sent to our line personnel who worked throughout the Christmas holiday.

Board approves the budget

The 2010 budget was approved at the January 21 meeting of the Board of Directors. Highlights are:

- Revenues = \$13,115,639
- Expenses = \$12,376,749
- Operating margins = \$738,890
- Total margins = \$1,277,260
- Construction costs = \$1,681,797
- AMR investment = \$473,150
- Heavy equip. investment = \$215,000

As you can see by the investment numbers, it will be a busy year. 2010 will be full of construction projects, customer rebuilds and new services, as well as our automatic meter reading system investment.

Last chance for Operation Round Up funds

Members help their neighbors a penny, a nickel, a dime and a quarter at a time through Operation Round Up (ORU). Thanks to the generosity of about half of NCE's members a lot of good work is done for schools, fire departments, youth organizations and hospices, just to name a few. "This type of program sets us apart from other power companies," said General Manager Rick Burud. "This is a people-helping-people program. Local non-profit organizations benefit from our members' generosity."

Organizations that serve the areas and communities of Murray or Nobles counties can request funds for projects involving community service, environment, disaster relief, economic development, education and youth. The next deadline is March 1.

Call your cooperative for an application at 507-372-7331, e-mail us at nce@noblesce.com or visit our website at www.noblesce.coop.

The small change that is gathered from participating members rounding up their electric bill, amounts to big change for community programs and projects. Small change does make a difference!

more than just water is slipping through your fingers

Your home wastes more water than you might realize and that's costing you money. The energy it takes to heat that water is literally washed down the drain, but there is something you can do to take control of your water usage and energy costs.

Annual Meeting Special
\$5

Purchase your Energy Saving Water Kit for only \$5 starting March 27 (at the Annual Meeting in Worthington) through April 30, 2010. A \$40 retail value. While supplies last!

In order to receive this Energy Saving Water Kit at the special discount price, you must be a cooperative member and you must use electricity to heat your water.



Residential rates vary from state to state

These state averages were released on November 13, 2009 by the Department of Energy.

State	2009	2008
Illinois	11.37	10.81
Indiana	9.40	8.73
Iowa	10.20	9.64
Kansas	9.71	9.10
Michigan	11.73	10.90
Minnesota	10.14	9.71
Missouri	8.58	8.08
Nebraska	8.45	7.81
North Dakota	7.53	7.41
Ohio	10.66	10.08
South Dakota	8.36	8.14
Wisconsin	12.09	11.50
NCE	8.40	7.00

As you can see, electricity rates are rising all across the nation because of increased costs associated with generating more electricity and

building more transmission lines to deliver the power.

Adding to these costs is Minnesota's mandate that 25 percent of electricity delivered to the state must be renewable by the year 2025. Wind energy just happens to cost more than any other source like coal. Since wind doesn't blow when we need the power the most, baseload energy must be added to ensure reliability.

The one unknown that may drastically raise the price of power for everyone is climate change legislation. We are fighting to ensure that any climate change policy goals adopted are fair, affordable and achievable. To make your voice and ours heard in this debate, join the Our Energy, Our Future™ grassroots awareness campaign at www.ourenergy.coop. To date, more than 600,000 members across the country have already done so.

Annual line patrol

NCE's linemen will be making the rounds on the annual line patrol of our entire system. They will be inspecting lines, poles and equipment for potential problems. Some of the items they will give special attention to are blown arrestors, shot insulators, loose guy wires, split or broken poles and trees that may be too close to the line.

Crews will also be reading meters to verify meter readings.

If you happen to see one of our trucks in your area, don't fret. We are conducting precautionary measures to ensure a safe and reliable system. Looking for any problems now before they disrupt your power.

www.noblesce.coop



Nobles Cooperative Electric is putting the power of the Internet to work for you. Our new website makes it much easier for you to do business with your cooperative. View and pay your bill online, enter meter readings, save money and stay safe, just to name a few ways to do it all online!

Manage your account

- Pay your bill online
- Submit your meter readings
- Sign up for Auto Pay
- View your bill
- Change your mailing address
- Request a security light service call
- Update your phone number
- Tree trimming request

Membership tools

- *Current Matters* newsletter
- Touchstone Energy® Saver
- Kids Zone
- Energy Saving Measures
- Business Energy Advisor
- Light Bulb Energy Saver
- Education Programs
- Safety presentations

Be sure to utilize our new online interactive tool that will help you learn how to save money and energy at home. Togetherwesave (at the bottom of our home page) illustrates numerous ways members can reduce their energy bills. The site has videos and applications that show energy-saving techniques, ideas and a virtual home tour.

Do it all online!

**Country Cupboard
Pineapple Bars**

2 T. sugar 1 1/4 c. flour 1 c. butter
Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile mix together a 20 oz. can of pineapple (crushed) and 1 c. sugar. Cook until this boils then add 3 tsp. corn starch mixed with 3 egg yolks and 1 tsp. lemon juice. Pour over crust. Beat 3 egg whites, then fold in 3/4 cup sugar. Arrange on pineapple mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.

Send your favorite **cereal** recipe to Nobles Cooperative Electric, ATTN: Tracey, P.O. Box 788, Worthington, MN 56187-0788. Entries must include your name, address, telephone number and Nobles' location number. All entries must be received by February 15. 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.

**Lora Anker
Edgerton**



**Nobles Cooperative
Electric**

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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

WildBlue tech support

888-326-4289

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Nobles County
Scott Preuss - 507-449-8870

General Manager

Richard G. Burud

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