



## Winter Storm Blankets Area in Heavy Snowfall



A winter storm swept through the area in the early hours of Saturday, November 13, leaving approximately 3,500 BENCO Electric members without power. BENCO's entire system was hit by the storm, from Gaylord to the Iowa border.

BENCO crews were called out Saturday morning and additional crews from neighboring cooperatives were called in to help restore power. In many

areas, crews needed to wait for downed transmission lines that fed our substations to be restored before they could begin work on BENCO's lines. It took approximately nine hours to complete the work and get power restored to the transmission lines. Once the transmission line work was done, BENCO crews began work on our lines. Most members had power restored by late Sunday evening and the remaining few members were restored by Monday morning.

This storm was the third storm this year to hit BENCO members. Many trees and branches have been weakened by prior high winds, tornadoes and flooding. The heavy snow we experienced from this storm downed many already weakened trees and power lines.

BENCO will be using more underground lines where feasible and will continue its tree trimming program to try to reduce some of the problem areas that are causing continuous outages.



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### After the Storm

During the storm, BENCO also experienced high call volume. Members calling in looking for an update on the restoration process and members calling in to report an outage for the first time received busy signals, as all calls were routed through the same phone lines. In all, BENCO's phone answering service, MAS Communications, received 15,904 calls.

BENCO has implemented a new **Storm Update Message** number. This number will give a short one-minute recorded

message update on what is taking place during storm-related outages.

You will still need to call the regular outage phone number 507-387-7964 to let BENCO know you have an outage. The new number is to keep you informed and free up the outage line for members reporting outages.

BENCO will also be reviewing other ways to communicate with our members when we are experiencing outages.

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**Report an Outage**  
**507-387-7964**

**24-hour Recorded**  
**Storm Update**  
**Message**  
**507-387-8888**

# From the Board

Thursday, October 28, 2010  
Blake Meshke Presided

The board reviewed and approved:

- The minutes of the September 30 board meeting.

- Capital Credits to estates totaling \$6,987.23.

The board reviewed the IRS Form 990. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve submitting the form.

Wade reviewed a rate comparison done by Dakota Electric Association.

Steve reviewed FEMA reimbursements expected for the June and September storms.

Sandy reviewed October disconnects and the cold weather rule.

Archie reviewed a letter from Federated Rural Electric Insurance following a safety inspection. He also reported that BENCO does not plan to proceed with a Corn Plus Substation Maintenance agreement.

Dave presented the proposed nominating committees and chairs for Districts 3, 5 & 7. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve them.

Dave reviewed the proposed District Meetings for Districts 3, 5 & 7. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve them.

Dave reported no new information on a potential REDLG loan for VINE.

Wade reviewed staff retirement plans.

Wade reviewed the Great River Energy rebates for energy efficiency.

Dick reviewed the progress on a Cellnet Pole attachment contract.

Chuck reviewed the St. Peter service area agreement, pole attachment contract, and the substation maintenance agreement.

Duane took over as chair of the meeting when Blake had to leave.

Duane called for director reports. Brad reported on Great River Energy (GRE). They reviewed the Falkirk coal mining plan and the 2011 budget.

CTV directors reported on the October board meeting. They discussed the potential of converting CTV Plus to digital.

Harvey reported on Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) activities and the 2011 budget.

Harlan reported on Cooperative Network activities and preparing for the annual meeting.

Individual director reports were given.

Duane called for new business.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to set November 22 and December 15 as regular board meeting dates for 2011.

## MRCI Recycles Members' Old Christmas Lights Brought in from the LED Program

Replacing your old Christmas lights benefits not only you, but MRCI too. When you purchase new LED Christmas lights and bring your receipt and your old Christmas lights to be recycled at BENCO, BENCO passes those old strings of lights on to MRCI. Once there, MRCI strips the strings of lights and they are able to recycle those parts for money.

So help yourself save some money and help a worthwhile organization in the process.

What you need to do:

1. Purchase from one up to ten strings of LED Christmas lights (50-bulb count minimum) from any retailer.
2. Bring in your receipt from 2010 showing your purchase of one to ten new LED strings of lights, accepted at the BENCO offices in Mankato and Frost, plus the equal number, one to ten strings of old Christmas lights.
3. BENCO will credit your electric account for \$3 per string up to 10 strings. All receipts need to be turned in by December 17, 2010.
4. Credit not to exceed half of the purchase price of lights.

**\$3 per string x 10 strings = \$30 credit**

**\$3 per string x 5 strings = \$15 credit**

**\$3 per string x 1 string = \$3 credit**

*a new light*  
on holiday traditions

## BENCO ELECTRIC

This newsletter is published monthly by BENCO Electric Cooperative, PO Box 8, Mankato, MN 56002-0008.

**Office Hours:** 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

**Phone:** 387-7963 or 1-888-79BENCO

**Outages/After Hours:** 387-7963 or 1-888-792-3626

Dave Sunderman - *Member Services Manager*

Kathy Gerber - *Editor*

### Board of Directors:

Blake Meshke - *President - District 6*  
Duane Ehrich - *Vice President - District 8*  
Harvey Hesse - *Secretary - MREA Director - District 5*  
Harlan Lanz - *Treasurer - MAC Director - District 2*  
Garfield Eckberg - *District 1*  
Brad Leiding - *GRE Director - District 3*  
John Wells - *District 4*  
Gary Stenzel - *District 7*  
Scott Johnson - *District 9*  
Wade Hensel - *General Manager*  
John C. (Chuck) Peterson - *Attorney*

**Board Meetings:** The last Thursday of each month - members are welcome to contact directors with items of interest or concerns in advance of the meetings.

## PCA Update

Actual PCA for November  
\$0.0290

Estimated PCA for December  
\$0.0315

Estimated PCA for January  
\$0.0272

The Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) is due to changes in the monthly wholesale rate from our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE).

# District Meetings Set for January

District meetings will be held for BENCO Electric Cooperative members in Districts 3, 5, and 7. If you live in one of these districts, you're invited to attend your district meeting. It's your opportunity to meet your district's director, talk with BENCO's General Manager Wade Hensel, and meet with staff members.

Come and learn more about your electric cooperative and have your voice heard as you place your vote for the director of your choice.

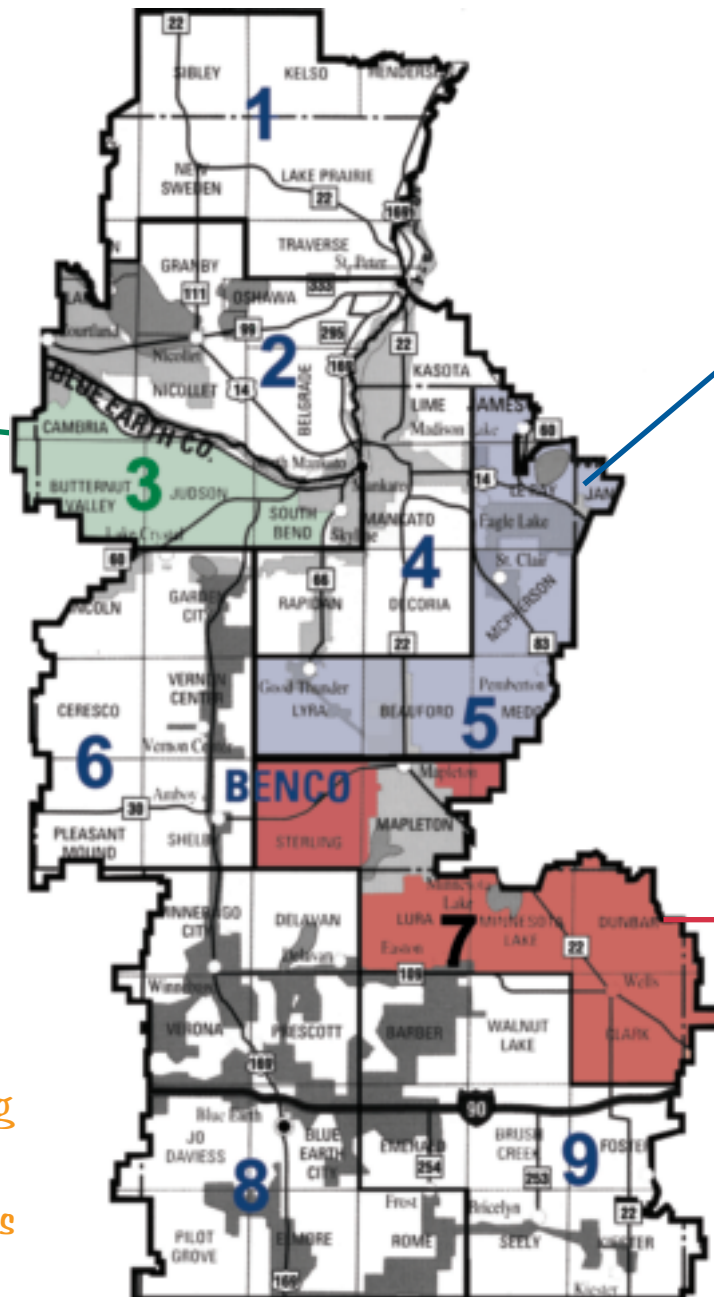
Voting will take place for district directors whose terms expire in April of 2011. The three directors' terms that will expire: District 3 - Brad Leiding; District 5 - Harvey Hesse; and District 7 - Gary Stenzel.

This is where you as a BENCO Electric member can decide who will represent your district before it goes to the general membership at the Annual Meeting on April 2, 2011, at the Verizon Wireless Civic Center. Please note the date, time and location of your district meeting.

See you there!



**Brad Leiding**  
 District 3  
 1:30 pm  
 Monday  
 January 3, 2011  
 Town Hall  
 Cambria



**Harvey Hesse**  
 District 5  
 1:30 pm  
 Wednesday  
 January 5, 2011  
 Fire Station  
 St. Clair



**Gary Stenzel**  
 District 7  
 1:30 pm  
 Thursday  
 January 6, 2011  
 Community Center  
 Wells

**Annual Meeting**  
**April 2, 2011**  
**Verizon Wireless**  
**Civic Center**



**What's Cookin': Cheesecake Bars**  
From the Kitchen of: Lee Bjerstedt

- 2 cans crescent rolls (8 rolls per can)
- 1 8-oz. pkg cream cheese
- 1/2 c sugar
- 1 egg yolk (save the whites)
- 1/2 tsp vanilla

In a medium bowl, mix cream cheese, sugar, egg yolk and vanilla; beat well. Lay first package of crescent rolls in 9 x 13 pan. Add cream cheese mixture over top of bottom layer and spread flat. Lay second package of crescent rolls to form top crust. Beat egg white till frothy; brush over top layer. Sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar, if desired. Bake as per instructions on crescent roll can. Let cool before cutting, store in refrigerator. Can top with pie filling: blueberry, cherry, etc.

You can receive a \$10 credit on your electric bill, if you send in your favorite recipe and it gets printed in the newsletter. Send your favorite recipes to: Kathy, BENCO Electric PO Box 8, Mankato, MN 56002

**Where, Oh Where?**

The following is a list of former BENCO Electric members whose capital credit checks were returned by the post office as undeliverable. Any information you can give us regarding the current whereabouts of these individuals or their relatives would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Dave G. or Jill at 387-7963 or 1-888-79BENCO.

**K**

- Myron Kahle, Mankato
- Jeff Kale, North Mankato
- Steve Kaler, Farmington
- Chris Kaphers, Mankato
- Mark Kapsner, Mapleton
- Cindy Kaufman, St. Peter
- Darla Keenan, North Mankato
- Douglas Kelley, Lake Crystal
- Lon Kelling, Fort Dodge IA
- John Kenning, St. Clair
- Gary King, Winnebago
- Patrick A. King, Mankato
- Leon Klause, Mankato

- Eugenia Kleinow, Rochester
- Joal R. Kleinow, Rochester
- Richard G. Kopp, North Mankato
- Bruce Korth, Ladson SC
- Michael Kortuem, Mankato
- Karyl Kraft, Richamon VT
- Benjamin Kranz, Mankato
- Donald Krinke, Mankato
- Jon & Ann Krueger, North Mankato
- Lori K. Krupp, Waterville
- Luann Krzmarzick, Sleepy Eye
- Sharon Kubick, Cedar Rapids IA

**L**

- John Lampert, Mankato

- Agnes Lang, Mankato
- Bob Lee, St. Peter
- Terry A. Lee, River Falls WI
- Kathy Libby, Mankato
- Michael E. Liegel, Menomonie WI
- Todd Lindemann, Mankato
- Michael D. Lloyd, Shakopee
- Roger Lodermeier, Mankato
- Jeff Luckhardt, Plymouth
- Mike Ludvik, Chaska
- Mary Luna, North Mankato
- Curtis A. Lund, Brooklyn Park
- David R. Lundborg, Monument CO
- Charles Lundgren JR, Eagle Lake
- Deann Luttmmer, Sleepy Eye