



District Meetings Held In January

District meetings were held in the following districts with directors up for election in 2011: Districts 3, 5 and 7.

Members heard reports from General Manager Wade Hensel and Board President Blake Meshke. Managers were on hand from Member Services, Engineering, Office Services, and Operations.

The following candidates will go before the membership at the annual meeting on Saturday, April 2. Each district and its respective candidate(s) are as follows: District 3 - Brad Leiding, District 5 - Harvey Hesse, and District 7 - Gary Stenzel.



District 3 Meeting



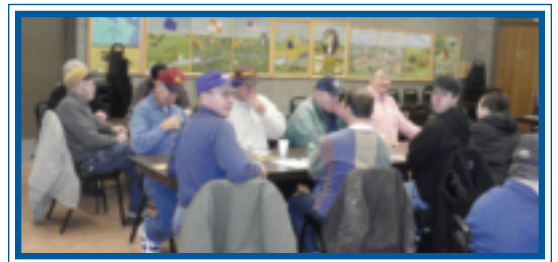
District 5 Meeting



*Blake Meshke
Board President*



*Wade Hensel
General Manager*



District 7 Meeting

Join BENCO Electric on a "Once-in-a-Lifetime" Trip to Alaska



There are still a few seats available on this great trip. Call Kathy at BENCO to get more information or to sign up.

387-7963

or

1-888-792-3626

July 11- 23, 2011

2010 Outage Report

The 2010 report summarizes the number of outages by category as required by the Rural Utility Services (RUS) and compares the averages over the last five years.

BENCO Electric Cooperative is committed to reducing the number of hours you are without electricity. Some of the programs which help accomplish this include: tree trimming, vegetation management, replacement of failing underground cable, and replacement of old and deteriorated poles and wires.

Average Outage Hours Per Consumer

Year	Power Supplier	Storms	Prearranged	All Other Causes	Totals
2006	0.437	0.380	0.002	0.713	1.531
2007	0.579	0.482	0.023	0.740	1.824
2008	0.518	0.230	0.014	0.741	1.503
2009	0.323	0.068	0.007	0.930	1.328
2010	1.472	5.538	0.019	2.306	9.335
5 Year Avg	0.666	1.339	0.013	1.086	3.104

PCA Update

Actual PCA for January
\$0.0369

Estimated PCA for February
\$0.0326

Estimated PCA for March
\$0.0278

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

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.

From the Board

Thursday, December 16, 2010
Blake Meshke Presided

The board reviewed and approved:

- The minutes of the November 30 board meeting.

- Capital Credits to estates totaling \$1,903.29.

The board and staff reviewed November and December storm-related outages. Ways to improve on both short- and long-range plans were discussed.

Blake named Duane Ehrich to attend the January GRE Board Meeting.

Wade reviewed the AMI plans.

The agreement with the City of St. Peter has been approved by the MPUC.

Wade presented the 2010 write-offs. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the write-offs.

Chuck reviewed the Heartland Security Services Line of Credit guarantee and an NRECA webinar he participated in on class actions.

Directors' reports were as follows:

Brad reported on the GRE Board Meeting. They reviewed the Section 45 approval and the 2011 budget.

CTV directors reported there would be a CTV board meeting next week.

Harvey reported on MREA activities.

Harlan reported on Cooperative Network activities.

New business:

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the Heartland Security Services resolution conditioned upon the other owners of Heartland Security Services also approving it.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the 2011 Budget and Work Plan as presented.

It takes a lot of energy to watch TV

When it comes to televisions, high definition equals high energy use, and big screens equal big electricity bills.

If you're shopping for a new TV, it's important to factor energy costs into your purchase. Decisions you make in the store can affect your electricity bill for years afterward.

For instance, if you opt for a plasma screen over an LCD, you can expect to spend at least an additional \$10 on electricity each month. Screen size makes a big difference as well: the electricity consumption of a 40-inch LCD television is roughly four times that of an otherwise identical 22-inch model.

However, it can be tricky to find information about a television's energy needs. Manufacturers rarely advertise energy consumption, and it almost never appears on in-store labels. That's why it's important that consumers do their own research, often through online sources.

Most televisions fall into one of four categories – plasma, LCD, rear projection and cathode ray tube (CRT) – and each has its own electricity needs. The following guide will provide the basic information you need before you buy your next big screen.

Plasma

Plasma screens often are cited as the largest energy users, mainly because their 42- to 65-inch screens typically draw 240-400 watts. Plus, most consume electricity even when they're turned off.

LCD

LCD TVs don't need much power to operate (111 watts on average) and their screens are illuminated through either cold-cathode fluorescent lamps or LEDs. LED units offer several benefits, notably better picture quality and thinner and lighter screens. They also use slightly less energy (101 watts on average).

Rear projection

Rear projection televisions tend to be the most energy efficient and boast the largest screen sizes. However, due to their overall weight, rear projection sets are not as readily available as plasma and LCD models.

Cathode ray tube (CRT)

CRT televisions are what most consumers know as the "traditional television set." These are becoming more difficult to find because they employ old technology and screen sizes rarely top 40 inches.



Agricultural & Industrial Electric Tax Exemption

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

Industries that use electricity, natural gas, water, and/or steam to produce items that are ultimately sold at retail are exempt from sales tax if the utilities are used directly in the production process. This exemption does not include utilities used for space heating and lighting of the production area or office, administration, or other non-production areas.

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

Production includes:

- manufacturing;
- farming;
- processing agricultural products (vegetable or animal) other than by restaurants or consumers;
- printing;
- photography;
- artwork (both fine art and commercial art);
- generating electricity;

- producing road building materials;
- horticulture;
- floriculture;
- raising pets, fur bearing animals, and research animals on a commercial basis;
- farming deer, elk, ostriches, llamas, and horses on a commercial basis.

If you have any questions, please call our office at 387-7963 or 1-888-79BENCO. You can also stop by and pick up an application.



P.O. Box 8
Mankato, MN 56002-0008
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSRST STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mankato, MN 56001
Permit No. 47



What's Cookin' : Cheese Ball
From the Kitchen of: Jackie Cesario

- 2 8-oz pkg cream cheese, softened
- 1 15-oz can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1/4 cup chopped pepper
- 2 T finely chopped onion
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 2 cups chopped pecans

Mix first five ingredients together. Add 1 cup nuts to mixture. Shape into a ball. Roll in remaining cup of nuts.

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.

R
Harold F. Revier, Mankato
Erwin G. Richardson, Elmore
Duwayne Roberts, Eagle Lake
Robert C. Rosenquist, St. Peter
Roger M. Rush, Traverse City MI

S
Tracy Sandberg, Mankato
Ramona Satre, Albert Lea
Joseph Schmidt, Nora Springs IA
Mike A. Schons, North Mankato

Joseph Schreder, Eagle Lake
Greg R. Schultz, Granada
Robert D. Schultz, Le Sueur
David Sears, Burnsville
Delight E. Shell, Welcome
Brent Shepherd, Mankato
Everett Sinclair, Caledonia
Patrick & Shelly Slator, Duluth
Clarence B. Smith, Winnebago
Douglas J. Smith, Eagle Lake
George E. Smith, North Mankato

Mary Speiser, Hoyt Lake
Mark P. Speltzer, Grafton WI
Dave Stanley, Albert Lea
Kevin & Julie Steichen, Cottage Grove
James P. Swenson, New Ulm
Viola Phillips, Gloucester VA
Donna J. Piper, North Mankato