



Generator Safety

The safety of you, our members, and our employees is a top priority at BENCO Electric, especially during dangerous times. When storms hit our area, we rush to your aid as soon as weather conditions allow our lineworkers to travel and make repairs safely.

Our line crews take necessary precautions before they work on downed power lines. First, they verify a circuit has been de-energized, and that proper switches are opened and tagged to isolate the circuit from the system. We place ground chains on the circuit—on both sides of workers—to make sure the line cannot be energized while work's being done. But even after these measures, our workers' lives remain in your hands.

BENCO Electric is proud of our outstanding safety record, but sometimes, no matter how many steps we take to keep everyone safe, the very people we are there to help unknowingly put our lives—and their own—in danger.

Portable generators, widely used when power lines are down, can prove fatal to lineworkers and your neighbors when used improperly.

A generator connected to a home's wiring or plugged in to a regular household outlet can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone who comes in contact with them—even if the line seems dead. The 120 - 240 volts of alternate current will become 7,200 volts of alternate current when it feeds through the transformer. BENCO Electric employees are not the only ones in danger when a portable generator is used improperly. Generator owners themselves may be at risk of electrocution, fire injury, property damage, or carbon monoxide poisoning if they do not follow the necessary safety rules.

Portable generators can be very helpful to consumers during outages. But we urge you to follow these safety guidelines when using one:

- § **Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use.** This can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs. Have a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely connect emergency generators to your home.
- § **Always plug appliances directly in to generators.** Connecting the generator to your home's circuits or wiring must be done by a qualified, licensed electrician who will install a transfer switch to prevent backfeeding.
- § **Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords.** Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and the plug has three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.
- § **Check your generator manual for the proper procedure on whether to ground your generator or not.**
- § **Never overload a generator.** A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.
- § **Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.**
- § **Keep the generator dry.** Operate it on a dry surface in a structure with proper ventilation.
- § **Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.**
- § **Never fuel a generator while it is operating.**
- § **Read and adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation.** Never cut corners when it comes to safety.

We encourage you to protect the well-being and safety of your family during outages, and safeguard those who come to your aid during emergency situations. When we work together for safety, we all benefit.



Parents of Sophomores and Juniors

Your daughter or son could win an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.

Here's how...

Does this sound too good to be true? Well, it's not! If your daughter or son is a sophomore or junior and you receive electric service from BENCO Electric Cooperative at your permanent residence, then he or she already qualifies!

Some of the sights and sounds that delegates may take in while in Washington, D.C. include trips to the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, the Smithsonian National Museum, Mount Vernon and FBI Headquarters. They may also take in a show at the Kennedy Center, dinner at the Hard Rock Cafe and a day on "the Hill" meeting Minnesota's Senators and Representatives.

This is a great opportunity for anyone with an interest in our nation's government and your local electric cooperative. Send your entry to:

Kathy, BENCO Electric, PO Box 8, Mankato, MN 56002

What we need from entrant:

- student's name
- parents' names
- name of the high school attended
- a list of activities student is involved in
- a one-page typed essay on "Why I want to go to Washington, D.C."



Entries must be received by February 10, 2011

PCA Update

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Actual PCA for December | Estimated PCA for January | Estimated PCA for February |
| \$0.0335 | \$0.0323 | \$0.0327 |

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

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Kathy Gerber - *Editor*

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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, November 30, 2010

Blake Meshke Presided

The board reviewed and approved:

- The minutes of the October 28 board meeting.
- Capital Credits to estates totaling \$4,503.17.

Mary Reeves from MAS Communications, Archie Kendall and Mike Heidemann joined the meeting and Mary reviewed the answering service process during the November 13-14 winter storm.

The attorney reviewed current legal work for the coop including the Record Retention Policy.

Blake called for director reports.

Brad reported on November Great River Energy (GRE) Board Meeting. The 2011 budget was reviewed.

CTV directors reported they will be having a board meeting in December.

Harvey reviewed the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) board meeting and the 2011 budget.

Harlan gave the Cooperative Network report.

Directors attending reported on the Cooperative Network annual meeting.

Individual director reports were given.

Blake called for new business.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve Policy 215 - Record Retention.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve board resolutions to update signatures for Frandsen Bank.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve a Consent to Transfer of Member Units from Wright-Hennepin CEA to WH Holding Investments, LLC for Heartland Security.

BENCO Employees Celebrate Years of Service



Bonnie Anderson
35 Years



John & Lori Westendorf
30 Years



Dave Gette
20 Years



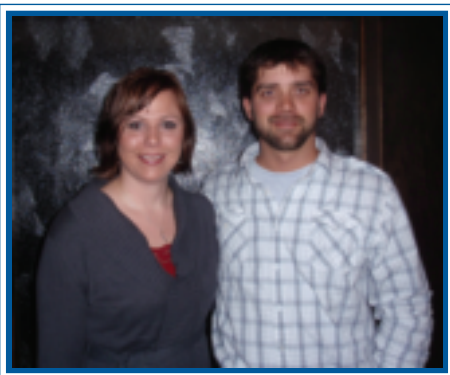
Steve & Diane Barrer
20 Years



Randy & Kathy Gerber
15 Years



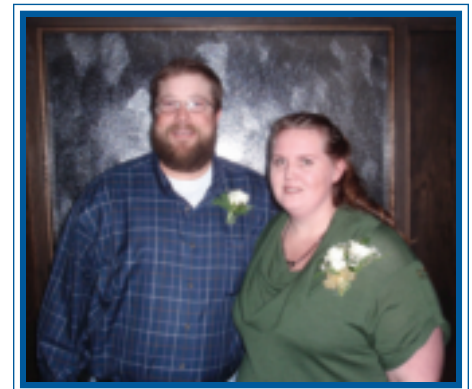
Jill Madetzke
15 Years



Jennifer & Ryan Plooster
5 Years



Pam & Tom Wilmes
5 Years



Jeremy & Heather Clark
5 Years



Pictured Left:
Joyce & Duane Ehrich
5 Years

Not Pictured:
Loren & Eileen Tolzmann
30 Years

Congratulations to all
BENCO Electric
Directors and Employees!



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

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



What's Cookin': Yummy Potato Soup From the Kitchen of: Sheryl Redding

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 10 medium potatoes, peeled | 2 carrots, chopped |
| 1/2 cup diced onions | 2 stalks celery, diced |
| 1 can beef broth | 1/2 cup sour cream |
| 1/2 cup butter or margarine | 1/2 tsp garlic powder |
| 1/2 to 1 lb bacon, fried & crumbled | 1/2 tsp salt |
| 1 pt half & half or 1 can evaporated milk | 1/2 tsp pepper |

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

Peel and quarter potatoes, add carrots, onions, celery, and beef broth. Cook slowly until well done. Mash the vegetables and add the remaining ingredients. Heat slowly to temperature for eating.

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.

Wayne Mahlum, St. Peter
Robert Malvin, Mankato
Fred Manderfield, Mankato
Renee DeMarino, Mankato
Alfredo Martinez, Mankato
William Marxen, Franklin
Annette Matzke, Bloomington
Christopher Mau, Mankato
Paul McCue, Delavan
Edward McGuire, Madison Lake
David G. Menke, Mankato
Steve Mesia, Lafayette
Ricky Metzler, Mankato
Emil Meurer, Mankato

Danial J. Meyer, Prior Lake
Sheldon E. Meyer, Lucan
John S. Miller, Mankato
Joelle Million, Mankato
Gene R. Mills, Payson AZ
Stephen W. Minnema, Middleton WI
Mike Moellenback, Kouts IN
Scott Mogck, Lake Crystal
Doug Moravek, Sioux City IA
John Moske, LeSueur
Troy Mueller, Mankato
Cynthia J. Murphy, North Mankato
P
Glen Passer, Wells

Michael Passmore, St. Peter
Joann Paul, Eagle Lake
Laura Pelletier, Eagle Lake
Dolores Peterson, New Ulm
Donald S. Peterson, Mankato
Patrick D. Peterson, Mankato
Keith Paap, Minnetonka
Kristin R. Phelps, Eagle Lake
Jill Marie Philipp, Mankato
Jamie Pierce, Madison Lake
Marguerite Pioske, Le Sueur
Francis Porter, Mason City
Elsa Preis, Good Thunder
Jeff Pribyl, Mankato