



New Automated Outage Reporting System to be Implemented in November

In November, BENCO will be implementing a new automated outage reporting system that will allow a large number of members to report outages during major storms. The new system will allow members to report their outage quickly, accurately and easily based on the phone numbers they log in. The new automated system will ask for the member's phone number and will have prompts that take the member through the outage reporting system.

Here's an example of what you will hear when you first call in:

Greetings. Thank you for calling BENCO Electric Cooperative. This system is designed to take your outage information and get it quickly in the hands of our dispatchers.

Caller ID indicates that you are calling from (repeats phone number). Is this the telephone number on record for the outage location? Press one for "yes" or two for "no".

The automated system will continue to take you through a series of questions to help pinpoint the location of the outage and to dispatch crews to the proper location. It also has options available to call you back when the outage has been fixed.

When major storms hit our service area, the new automated system will allow us to get the information quickly, assess the damage, and get crews dispatched so we can get the power restored as quickly as possible.

So please, help us help you, by updating your information with us by November 15. You can either return the form below with your bill, or submit information online at www.BENCO.org. If you go online, please follow these simple steps:

Go to www.BENCO.org.

Click on Pay Online.

Enter your account number and password or register as a new user. (If you are a new user, you will need your account number, meter number and phone number.)

Click on Your Account Maintenance.

Click Start next to Account Update.

Click highlighted (in blue) name.

Change number in appropriate box under Change Phone Information.

Click Submit.

Thank you for your assistance.

Phone Numbers Update

The following information will be needed to update your account for the new automated outage system. If you have any questions, please call the office at 387-7963 or 1-888-792-3626. Please update the information and return it to us by November 15, or go online at www.BENCO.org and update it on your account. Thank you.

Name: _____

Account Number: _____

Phone Number: _____

Second Phone Number: _____

Nomination Process For Directors Begins in Districts 1, 4 and 9

The BENCO Electric Board of Directors consists of nine directors, with one director representing each of BENCO's nine districts. Each Director is elected for a three-year term, and there is no term limit. The director rotation is currently: Directors in districts 1, 4 and 9 are up for election in 2012; districts 2, 6 and 8 are up for election in 2013; and districts 3, 5 and 7 are up for election in 2014. A director can be elected by the board to serve as President, Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer.

The following guidelines must apply if you are interested in running for a current open director position:

- You are a resident of District 1, 4 or 9.
- You are receiving electric service from BENCO Electric at the above residence.
- Your account with BENCO Electric is in good standing.

As a director you must:

- be willing to attend regular and special board meetings.
- be willing to abide by and uphold the Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, and policies of BENCO Electric Cooperative.

If you are interested in being nominated at your district meeting, or you would like more information, please contact Dave Sunderman, Member Services Manager, at 387-7963 or 1-888-792-3626, or e-mail him at Daves@BENCO.org.

Nominations for director must be sent in to Dave Sunderman no later than November 28, 2011.

From the Board

Thursday, September 29, 2011
Blake Meshke Presided

The board reviewed and approved:

- The minutes of the August 18 board meeting.

- Capital Credits to estates totaling \$3,644.90.

Wade reviewed the department managers' succession plans.

The attorney reviewed current legal work.

Directors' reports were as follows:

Brad reported on the September GRE Board meeting.

Harvey reported on MREA activities.

Harlan gave the Cooperative Network report.

Directors attending reported on the MREA Washington, D.C. meetings.

Directors attending reported on the NRECA/CFC regional meetings.

Individual reports were given.

New Business:

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to set December 19 as the regular December board meeting.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the 2012 Board Meeting dates.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to increase the power cost adjustment base by 20 mills and to increase all rates the same 20 mills effective with the November 2011 billing, resulting in no revenue change for the cooperative.

PCA Update

Actual PCA for October
\$0.0305

Estimated PCA for November
\$0.0288

Estimated PCA for December
\$0.0329

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.

BENCO Electric will be closed
to observe the
Thanksgiving holiday,
Thursday, November 24 and
Friday, November 25.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Load Management Controls Will Be Replaced

If you have bought a water heater or had a control put on your air conditioner, heat pump or dual fuel system, BENCO will be updating your control.

The Federal Government has sold off the frequency that the controls were on, and now BENCO has to use a new frequency. This means that BENCO will need to change out all the load management controls.

If we have your current phone number on file, you will be notified by the phone notification system when the contractors are working in your area. The two contractors working on this project will be BC Electric and Schroeder Electric. The project will begin this October and will be finished toward the end of 2012.

If you have any questions, please call John at 387-7963 or 1-888-792-3626.

Upper Left Red Light On - water heater is being controlled

Upper Center Amber Light On - a/c or dual fuel is being controlled

Bottom Green Light On - the control is communicating

All other lights are for future use



Save on LED Holiday Lights

Strings of holiday lights may seem little, but they can dramatically increase your home's energy use. However, new technology in decorative lights will allow you to make your season brighter without costing you on your electric bill.

LED lights (light emitting diodes) are an energy efficient and safe alternative to the traditional incandescent holiday bulbs. They cost a little more, but use a fraction of the electricity.

Compared to the previous generation of holiday lights, LEDs use approximately 1/30 of the electricity. Put another way, the amount of electricity needed to light a single bulb on a string of incandescent holiday lights would power two whole strings of LEDs.

And because they're cool to the touch, LEDs reduce the risk of fire when strung on live trees or flammable surfaces.

When shopping for LEDs, always look for the ENERGY STAR label. ENERGY STAR-certified lights have met strict specifications by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy.

If all the holiday and decorative light strings sold in America this year were ENERGY STAR qualified, more than 2 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity would be saved each year, and greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced by the equivalent of nearly 300,000 cars.

To help you get started on your savings, BENCO Electric will once again be offering a \$3.00 rebate on LED Christmas lights.

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 2011 showing your purchase of one to ten new LED Christmas lights, accepted at the BENCO offices in Mankato and Frost, plus the equal number (one to ten) of 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 16, 2011.
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

Now you've not only saved money on your new Christmas lights, you'll also save money on your electric bill over the holiday season.

Merry Christmas from BENCO Electric.



What's Cookin': Southwest White Chili
From the Kitchen of: Kathy Byram

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2 c cooked and diced chicken | 1 tsp cumin |
| 2 cans chicken broth | 1/2 tsp oregano |
| 1 4-oz can chopped green chilis, drained | 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper |
| 1 med onion, chopped | 1/2 tsp dried cilantro |
| 1 T olive oil | 1/2 c sour cream |
| 1 can white beans, drained (cannelloni or white navy beans) | 1 c shredded Monterey Jack cheese |
| 1 tsp garlic powder or 1 T minced garlic | |

Saute onions in olive oil. Add chicken, green chilis, garlic, cumin, oregano, cayenne and cilantro. Simmer about 1 minute. Add broth and simmer 10 minutes. Add beans, sour cream and cheese. Heat through. Serve with extra cheese if desired.

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 Jill at 387-7963 or 1-888-79BENCO.

J
John J. Jacobsen, Mankato
Waclav M. Jagiella, Atlanta GA

Joe Janda, Las Vegas NV
Jeff Jansen, Oakland NE
George Jenkins, Jr., Lake Crystal
Allen J. Jensen, Mapleton
Donald L. Jensen, Mankato
Marcus A. Jensen, Delavan
Marianna C. Jergenson,
Sioux Falls SD
Michelle John, Mankato
Sandra K. Johns, Eagle Lake
Charles J. Johnson, Arlington
Jeanne Johnson, St. Paul
Roger E. Johnson, Stewartville

Thomas P. Johnson, Gallup NM
Thomas P. Johnson, Mankato
Todd Johnson, Lake Crystal
Wayne Johnson, Monticello
Wayne C. Johnson, Mankato
Bruce D. Jones, Fredonia KS
Chad H. Jones, Mankato
Marie L. Jones, Lake Crystal
Melinda Jones, Mankato
Wendy & Jeffery L. Jones, Mankato
William Juberian, Mankato
K
Jeff Kale, North Mankato

Steve Kaler, Farmington
Jo A. Kalis, Belle Plain
Louis L. Kalis, Wells
Darla Keenan, North Mankato
David L. Keithley, Mankato
Lon Kelling, Fort Dodge IA
John Kenning, St. Clair
Wade Kester, Janesville
Patrick A. King, Mankato
Stephen Kittelson, Mankato
Joal R. Kleinow, Rochester
Michael L. Knotts, Bloomington
David Knutson, Kasota