



Water Reaches Critical Level at Willow Creek Sub



According to the National Weather Service, over 9 inches of rain fell in Amboy during late September's two-day rain. The Willow Creek Substation,

located near Amboy, is shown in photos taken on Thursday afternoon, Sept. 23.

The Willow Creek Sub continued to work through the storm due to the fact that the water level did not reach the electronic panels.

Power did need to be rerouted at the St. Clair substation and BENCO did experience some outages due to the storm.

October is Cooperative Month

How can I distinguish a co-op from other organizations? A co-op is a business, usually incorporated, that sells goods and services. It is not a charitable organization or a social service agency.

Who benefits from the co-op's existence? A co-op exists primarily for the benefit of its members. Many co-ops also support other parts of the community through various programs and philanthropic activities as part of their commitment to cooperative values and principles.

Who controls a co-op? In a cooperative, members democratically control the direction of the business. In most co-ops each member gets one vote. Members elect a board of directors to monitor the business, set goals and hire management to operate their business. Ultimately, the board is accountable to the members for its decisions.

What motivates people to form a co-op? In a co-op, individuals are motivated by a shared need for certain products or services. By joining together, members gain access to products, services or markets not otherwise available to them. In other words, when forming a co-op members are motivated to become co-owners of the business primarily so that their mutual needs can be met. And co-ops return financial gains to their members, whether through discounts, lower costs or patronage refunds.

From the Board

Thursday, August 19, 2010
Blake Meshke Presided

The board reviewed and approved:
• The minutes of the July 22 board meeting.

• Capital Credits to estates totaling \$2,087.84.

Engineering Manager Dick Hiniker and Operations Manager Archie Kendall joined the meeting with Blue Earth County representative Julie Conrad. They reviewed the river crossing with pictures before and after the bank slid into the river. After their review, tie line alternatives were discussed.

Archie reviewed with the board plans to do substation maintenance for Corn Plus ethanol plant.

Dick reviewed a service area agreement with the City of St. Peter. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agreement.

Dick reviewed updating the neutral isolator agreements. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the updated agreements.

Wade reviewed the June 2010 financial, statistical and operating reports. As a result of the June storms, maintenance expenses were much higher.

Wade reported on the staff review of the emergency response plan with Lori Read after the June storms.

A Region 9 solar project was reviewed.

Blake called on Chuck for the legal report. Chuck reviewed the St. Peter service area agreement, pole attachment contract, and the Rural Utilities Service

(RUS) loan conversion to Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC).

John reviewed the communication and requirements for members thinking about putting up a less-than-40kW wind generator.

Blake called for director reports.

Brad reported on GRE. They showed photos of the GRE board visit to Coal Creek Station and Spiritwood.

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

Harvey reported on Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) activities.

Harlan and Tom reported on Cooperative Network activities.

Scott and Harvey reported on a National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA) rate seminar they attended.

Directors attending reviewed the Energy Issues Summit.

Directors attending reported on the various county 4-H sales.

Individual director reports were given.

Directors reported on attending Farmfest.

Blake called for new business.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the Strategic Thinking initiatives for 2010–2012.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve \$100 per 4-H State Fair auction participant of members' children.

North to Alaska

Join Benco Electric
on a
"Once-in-a-Lifetime"
trip to Alaska



July 11–23, 2011

Call Kathy at Benco to get more information on this great trip or to sign up.

387-7963
or
1-888-792-3626

BENCO ELECTRIC

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1-888-792-3626

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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 September
\$0.0290

Estimated PCA for October
\$0.0274

Estimated PCA for November
\$0.0272

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

BENCO Attends Area Auctions



Anna Drummer



Cassandra Giefer & BENCO
Director Scott Johnson



Deven Michels



Kelten Kelly



Thomas Keltgen



Emma Severns

Going South for the Winter?

If you're one of the lucky "snow-birds" who escapes to the sunny south during the Minnesota winters, please call the office and let us know when you are leaving, when you will be back, and what arrangements you would like to make sure your bill gets paid while you are gone.

Call 387-7963
or
1-888-792-3626

Cold Weather Rule Takes Effect October 15

Minnesota's cold weather law provides that from October 15 through April 15, an electric cooperative or other municipal utility cannot disconnect a residential customer for nonpayment if the disconnection would affect that customer's primary heat source and the following conditions apply: **APPLICATION; NOTICE TO RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS.**

(a) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. A municipal utility or cooperative electric association utility may (i) verify income on forms it provides or (ii) obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, that uses an income eligibility threshold at or below 50 percent of the state median household income;

(2) A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household; and

(3) A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills. (b) A municipal utility or

a cooperative electric association must, between August 15 and October 15 of each year, notify all residential customers of the provisions of this section.

NOTICE TO RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER FACING DISCONNECTIONS.

Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during the period between October 15 and April 15, a municipal utility or cooperative electric association must provide the following information to a customer:

- (1) a notice of proposed disconnection;
- (2) a statement explaining the customer's rights and responsibilities;
- (3) a list of local energy assistance providers;
- (4) forms on which to declare inability to pay; and
- (5) a statement explaining available time payment plans and other opportunities to secure continued utility service.

RESTRICTIONS IF DISCONNECTION NECESSARY.

If a residential customer must be involuntarily disconnected between October 15 and April 15 for failure to comply with the provisions of subdivision 1, the disconnection must not occur:

- (1) on a Friday, unless the customer declines to enter into a payment agreement offered that day in person or via personal contact by telephone by a municipal utility or cooperative electric association;

- (2) on a weekend, holiday, or the day before a holiday;
- (3) when utility offices are closed;
- (4) after the close of business on a day when disconnection is permitted, unless a field representative of a municipal utility or cooperative electric association who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement, accept payment, and continue service, offers a payment agreement to the customer.

Further, the disconnection must not occur until at least 20 days after the notice required in subdivision 2 has been mailed to the customer or 15 days after the notice has been personally delivered to the customer.

(b) If a customer does not respond to a disconnection notice, the customer must not be disconnected until the utility investigates whether the residential unit is actually occupied. If the unit is found to be occupied, the utility must immediately inform the occupant of the provisions of this section. If the unit is unoccupied, the utility must give seven days' written notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy assistance provider before making a disconnection.

(c) If, prior to disconnection, a customer appeals a notice of involuntary disconnection, as provided by the utility's established appeal procedure, the utility must not disconnect until the appeal is resolved.

APPLICATION TO SERVICE LIMITERS. For the purposes of this section, "disconnection" includes a service or load limiter or any device that limits or interrupts electric service in any way.



What's Cookin': Washington Apple Cake
From the Kitchen of: Amy Theuninek

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 3 eggs | 1 tsp soda |
| 2 c sugar | 1/2 tsp salt |
| 1 c cooking oil | 1 tsp vanilla |
| 2 c flour | 1 c chopped walnuts |
| 2 tsp cinnamon | 4 c thinly sliced, pared tart apples (5) |

Beat eggs with a mixer until thick & light. Combine sugar & oil; pour into eggs. With mixer on med. speed stir together flour, cinnamon, soda & salt. Add to egg mixture with vanilla; beat to mix. Stir in walnuts. Spread apples in a buttered 9x13 pan. Pour batter over apples, spreading to cover. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Remove from oven and cool.

Cream cheese icing: Beat softened 3-oz pkg cream cheese until fluffy. Beat in 1/4 c melted butter; then beat in 2 c powdered sugar & 1 tsp lemon juice. Spread over cooled cake. Refrigerate.

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.

F

- Kevin J. Feehan, Lexington KY
- Edwin & Sharon Fiala, Albuquerque NM
- William Fiebelkorn, LeSueur
- Patrick J. Fischer, Eagle Lake
- Barbara J. Fischer, New Ulm
- John Fitzgerald, Lafayette
- Connie Fitzloff, Mankato
- Gladys Flantz, Arlington
- Susan Fletcher, Mankato
- Tim Fletcher, Rockford
- Jose Flores, Sleepy Eye
- James Florey Jr., Mankato
- Donald M. Fouse, Waseca

- Russell E. Fowler Sr., Mankato
- Dan Franke, North Mankato
- Lee & Rachell Fratze, Sioux Falls SD
- Douglas R. Frericks, Vernon Center
- Harvey Freundl, Mankato
- Bobbie Frey, Mankato
- Brad Friedrichs, Albert Lea

G

- G & G Rodning, Gaylord
- Charles Gallagher, Coon Rapids
- Duane Garber, Lindsborg KS
- Rene Garcia, LeSueur
- Brian Garvin, Mason City IA
- Anthony Gernert, Maple Grove

- Lynn Gessner, Pemberton
- Mike Gessner, Kasota
- Jeff Gilbertson, Mankato
- Gene Glynn, Mankato
- Leslie Good, Mankato
- Jerry D. Goodburn, Brainerd
- Gilbert J. Garackowski, Oldsmar FL
- Michel Graf, Lafayette LA
- Karen Grey, Mankato
- Joseph F. Griebel, Lake Crystal
- Owen Grunzke, Breezy Point
- Alvina Guentzel, Blue Earth
- Terri Gumto, North Mankato
- Scott Gustavson, New Ulm