



BENCO Electric and Brown County REA Boards Hold Strategic Thinking Meeting

Strategic initiatives for 2010–2012 were developed in a two-day strategic thinking session, in late June 2010, for BCREA and BENCO boards of Directors, along with the management teams from both cooperatives.

Several topics were covered and presented in the two-day session, all relating to costs and efficiencies of bringing reliable and affordable electricity to our members.

Presentations from Great River Energy (GRE), the wholesale power supplier for BENCO and BCREA, gave information on extra costs of complying with the renewable energy standards that have been mandated by the state: 25% renewable energy by the year 2025. GRE has now purchased all the renewable energy it needs to meet the state mandate through the year 2022. Since the electrical power that both cooperatives purchase from GRE represents 60% of our costs, the decisions made by GRE have a huge impact on local distribution cooperatives like ours.

The group was updated on changing technologies and the need to embrace the “smart grid.” This would allow for smart pricing through smart metering devices, which could change how our members use electricity, encourage energy efficiency, and improve the use of demand-side management investments.

Reports were heard on current legislative and regulatory issues in Washington, D.C., and St. Paul. The potential legislative and regulatory changes could have a profound and expensive impact on rural electric members in Minnesota.

Updates on financing for distribution cooperatives like BENCO and BCREA were presented. Financing for the new smart grid technologies and views on future interest rates were also reviewed.

BENCO & BCREA General Manager Wade Hensel reviewed the strategic initiatives developed in 2008, and the results of all the efforts made to fulfill the initiatives.

With all this information as background, the Boards of Directors and management teams developed the following strategic imperatives for the time frame 2010–2012:

1. Operational excellence – Safely provide reliable service at competitive rates with increased member satisfaction.
2. Communications – Continue to improve communication with members through a variety of means, including reviewing the use of social networking.
3. Legislative – Communicate with the people making decisions in Washington, D.C., and St. Paul, and do all possible to protect our cooperative membership.
4. New Technologies – Learn about the availability, use and efficiencies provided by new technologies. Make cost-effective decisions on their use.

The first 3 strategic initiatives are carried over from our prior Strategic Thinking session and represent the basic work of your electric cooperative. The new technology imperative represents the need to participate in change as the smart grid is developed, but still make sure decisions made are economically sound. With these strategic initiatives in mind, we will use them to fulfill our mission, which is to provide the best possible service at the lowest reasonable cost, consistent with sound business management.



Tune In To CTV's New Web site...

CTV members can now go online to learn more about CTV and get current CTV news—www.ctv.coop. In addition, channel lineups and antenna dealers are listed.

If you live in the area and watch local networks over the air, you are watching CTV. These channels aren't free. CTV



owns towers and equipment that pick up the Twin Cities channels and then rebroadcast them to local viewers.

Like your electric cooperative, CTV is member-supported. Subscriber fees pay for CTV's upkeep, equipment and new features, like the Web site. If you are not a CTV subscriber, go to the Web site; pay using a credit card annually (\$72) or seasonally (\$36), or print the coupon to mail in a check; \$6 a month pays for 16+ digital channels, which makes CTV a bargain compared to satellite companies. Viewers in the Godahl area have even more options with CTV Plus, including ESPN and a movie channel.

The graphic above shows the homepage. Simply click on the remote's buttons to navigate around the Web site.

From the Board

Thursday, July 22, 2010
Blake Meshke Presided

The board reviewed and approved:

- The minutes of the June 28 board meeting.

- Capital Credits to estates totaling \$1,827.28.

Wade reviewed a proposal to refinance RUS debt with financing from NCSC through CFC with savings over the term of the loans of nearly \$200,000.

The August Coal Creek trip was cancelled due to not enough participation.

Matt Brandup and Todd McMichael from RESCO joined the meeting. Matt reviewed with the board the history of RESCO and presented a capital credit check to the Cooperative for patronage in RESCO.

The attorney reviewed current legal work for the coop.

Directors' reports were as follows:

Brad reported on the August GRE Board Meeting. The GRE Strategic Plan was reviewed.

CTV board members reported that the annual meeting will be held July 26 with a guest speaker from KEYC-TV.

Harvey reviewed recent MREA activities including district meetings.

Harlan gave the Cooperative Network report.

Directors attending reported on the MREA District 5 & 6 meetings.

Garfield reported on writing a letter to the editor about rate regulation by the MPUC for Lake Country Power.

New business:

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the following resolution: to refinance RUS debt with financing through NCSC.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve November 30, 2010, for the regular November board meeting.

PCA Update

Actual PCA for August
\$0.0365

Estimated PCA for September
\$0.0281

Estimated PCA for October
\$0.0274

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

BENCO ELECTRIC

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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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Duane Ehrich - *Vice President - District 8*
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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 Youth Delegate Jennifer Gish Returns from Washington, D.C.

Jennifer Gish, daughter of Randy and Lisa Gish of St. Peter, was among the nearly 1,500 high school students from across the country, 33 of them from Minnesota, who participated in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour held June 12–17, 2010, in Washington, D.C.

Jennifer attends school at Mankato West High School and she is active in jazz, pep and symphonic bands, softball, volleyball and drama club. Jennifer was chosen to represent BENCO after her essay on “Why I Want to Go to Washington, D.C.” was chosen as the winning entry.

Each year in June, an action-filled week provides high school students opportunities to learn first-hand what it is like to be involved in politics, community service and today’s pressing issues. The theme of the 2010 Youth Tour was “Commitment to Community.” Highlights included meeting with their elected representatives in the U.S. House and Senate to discuss the process of government and issues of the day, and increasing their knowledge of cooperative electric utilities and American history.



Jennifer Gish
Parents: Randy & Lisa



The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been a joint effort of local electric co-ops such as BENCO Electric, their statewide co-op associations, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in Arlington, Virginia, for more than 40 years.

In addition to taking in the sights and sounds of the nation’s capital, all the state groups convened for National Youth Day to learn from public figures and other inspirational speakers. This year’s Youth Day agenda included Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic Medalist and two-time World Champion Wheelchair Basketball competitor.

The students were also treated to an amazing portrayal of a very influential United States Senator who authored the laws creating the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and Rural Electrification Act (REA) in the early 1930s. Current Nebraska State Senator David Landis tells the story of the late U.S. Senator George W. Norris (R-NE), in character, explaining the formation of and the politics surrounding the creation of electric cooperatives and the Rural Electrification Act.



July 11–23, 2011

**Join BENCO Electric on a
“Once-in-a-Lifetime” trip to Alaska**

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

387-7963

or

1-888-792-3626



What's Cookin': Hash Browns
From the Kitchen of: **Linda Hiniker**

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 - 2 lb bag of hash browns | 8 oz shredded cheddar cheese |
| 8 oz sour cream | 1 T butter, melted |
| 1 can cream of mushroom soup | 2 cups corn flakes, crushed |

In a large bowl, combine sour cream, mushroom soup, and cheese. Mix well. Add hashbrowns to mixture. Spread mixture out in greased cake pan. Bake for approximately 1 hour at 350 degrees. Form crumb mixture using crushed corn flakes and melted butter. Sprinkle crumb mixture on top of hash browns and continue baking for 10 more minutes.

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.

C
David Carcaccio, Morgan Hill CA
Bonnie Mae Carpenter, Mankato
Marilyn Charleain, Mankato
Julie Chesney, Eagle Lake
Chad Christenson, North Mankato
Kendall Christenson, Omaha NE
Paul T. Christianson, Mankato
Jerome Clyne, New Ulm
Lyle Colwill, Mankato
Steve Connelly, Mankato
Daniel T. Connors, Lititz PA

D
DAH Inc, Easton

Kevin Dardis, Eagle Lake
Cindy Dauer, Eagle Lake
Michael A. Dauk, Crystal
Beverly A. Day-Cunningham, Osseo
John Demers, Easton
L. Gerald Dentinger, Duluth
Valerie Deschene, Mankato
Barbara Devens, Mankato
Patrick Doherty, LeSueur
Natalie Domeier, North Mankato
Janet Donlin, Streamwood IL
Brian D. Dorr, Eagle Lake
Darla Drager, Easton
John Dusek, Mankato

Darrin Dylla, Wells

E
Edwin C. Eccles, St. Bonifacius
Vicki Eckert, North Mankato
Bret Eggersdorfer, North Mankato
David Emanuel, North Mankato
David Enfield, Mankato
Donna Engebretson, Merrill WI
Evelyn Erickson, New Ulm
Marcus Erickson, Alden
Ronald R. Ernst, Gaylord
Randall Evans, North Mankato
Marie Exner, Hopkins