



Storm Damages Vital Transmission Line

After severe weather swept through west central Minnesota on Aug. 1, one of Great River Energy's most important assets was left out of commission. The storm damaged three transmission line towers and cut off Great River Energy's largest power plant from providing electricity to cooperative members in Minnesota.

The +/- 400-kilovolt direct current transmission line spans more than 1,600 towers and 435 miles from Great River Energy's Coal Creek Station power plant near Underwood, N.D., to the Dickinson Converter Station, located near Buffalo, Minn.

The line delivers 1,100 megawatts of electricity from Great River Energy's largest power plant and has operated reliably since it was energized in 1978. The line was built to withstand extreme conditions. This is only the second tower failure in 33 years.

"The line is essentially an extension cord between our members in Minnesota and Coal Creek Station," said Great River Energy Transmission Vice President Will Kaul. "It's an absolutely vital resource for us to provide reliable and affordable power."

A portion of Coal Creek Station's output was redirected to the North Dakota electric grid while the line was down.

The line was re-energized the evening of Aug. 5 using 18 temporary wooden structures to replace the metal structures that were damaged.

Tremendous teamwork made it possible to reach this goal. At times, up to 50 people were working at the construction site. Local residents were very accommodating to repair crews. Two nearby landowners allowed Great River Energy crews to use their farmyard to stage materials and equipment, and a restaurant out of Lowry, Minn., catered most of the meals to the job site.

Engineering for a permanent repair plan has begun. Great River Energy has three spare towers in inventory that can be used to replace the damaged structures. The foundations of the towers were also damaged and will have to be replaced.

Great River Energy and BENCO Electric want to thank their members for doing their part in conserving energy during this critical time. Your efforts were much appreciated.



Refrigerator and Freezer Energy Tips

Appliances account for about 17% of your household's energy consumption, with refrigerators, clothes washers, and clothes dryers at the top of the consumption list. To help keep the cost of running your refrigerator or freezer down, follow these energy efficient tips.

- Don't keep your refrigerator or freezer too cold. Recommended temperatures are 37° to 40°F for the fresh food compartment of the refrigerator and 5°F for the freezer section. If you have a separate freezer for long-term storage, it should be kept at 0°F.
- To check refrigerator temperature, place an appliance thermometer in a glass of water in the center of the refrigerator. Read it after 24 hours. To check the freezer temperature, place a thermometer between frozen packages. Read it after 24 hours.
- Regularly defrost manual-defrost refrigerators and freezers; frost buildup decreases the energy efficiency of the unit. Don't allow

frost to build up more than one-quarter of an inch.

- Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight. Test them by closing the door over a piece of paper or a dollar bill so it is half in and half out of the refrigerator. If you can pull the paper or bill out easily, the latch may need adjustment, the seal may need replacing, or you might consider buying a new unit.
- Cover liquids and wrap foods stored in the refrigerator. Uncovered foods release moisture and make the compressor work harder.

\$ Long-Term Savings Tip

- Look for the ENERGY STAR label when buying a new refrigerator. Select a new refrigerator that is the right size for your household. Top freezer models are more energy efficient than side-by-side models. Features like icemakers and water dispensers, while convenient, will increase energy use.

Information from the Department of Commerce.

From the Board

Friday, July 29, 2011
Blake Meshke Presided

The board reviewed and approved:
• The minutes of the June 30 board meeting.

- Capital Credits to estates totaling \$7,397.33.

Wade reviewed the safety report and a MREA safety meeting was held in July.

The attorney reviewed recent legal work for the cooperative.

Directors' reports were as follows:
Brad reported on the July GRE Board meeting and scenario planning.

CTV directors reported that the annual meeting will be August 1.

Harvey reviewed MREA activities.
Harlan gave the Cooperative Network report.

Directors attending reported on MREA director training.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to set November 29th as the regular November Board meeting.

PCA Update

Actual PCA for August
\$0.0462

Estimated PCA for September
\$0.0298

Estimated PCA for October
\$0.0290

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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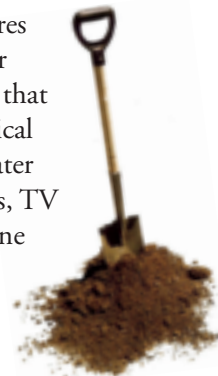
Board of Directors:

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.

Call 811 before you dig!

Anyone planning to dig more than 12 inches is now required by law to notify the state of their intentions at least 48 hours in advance before digging takes place. All digging requires the 48-hour notification so that buried electrical lines, city water and sewer lines, TV cable, telephone lines and gas lines can be located.



September is Farm Safety Month

Safe Use of Harvesting Equipment

Harvesting equipment is a necessity on farms to gather the crops for a bountiful harvest. Harvest time is primary revenue time on many farms and is also one of the peak periods for farm injuries and deaths. Many of these injuries can be prevented through effective farm safety management.



- Develop a “safety first” attitude. Follow safe work practices all the time and set a good example for others.
- Look up and see where power lines are located. Maintain a 10-ft distance between your equipment and power lines. Look for poles and guy wires also.
- Be physically and mentally fit before operating equipment. Fatigue, stress and worry can distract you from safely operating equipment. Take frequent breaks.
- Pay attention to all safety information. Read operator’s manual and warning decals.
- Inspect the equipment and correct any hazards before operating.
- Identify hazardous areas on equipment and make sure you stay away from moving parts. Beware of pinch points, shear points, wrap points, pull-in areas, thrown objects, crush points, stored energy hazards and freewheeling parts.
- Make sure everyone who operates the equipment has the appropriate training and is physically able to operate it safely.
- Shut down equipment, turn off the engine, remove key and wait for moving parts to stop before dismounting equipment.
- Keep bystanders and others away from equipment operation area. Do not allow “extra riders”, especially children.

Inspection

- Are PTO shields in place?
- Are safety locks operational?
- Is reflective “Slow Moving Vehicle” sign visible?
- Is a 20 lb. “ABC” fire extinguisher in place?
- Are guards and shields in place?
- Are there any leaks in hydraulics?
- Are lights working properly?

Grain Storage Structures and Handling Equipment

Storage and handling of large volumes of grain or feed on farms is common in many areas. Automated equipment has made handling of grain easy and fast. But, grain storage structures and handling equipment create hazardous work areas. Farm workers should make sure they take the proper steps to put safety first to prevent injuries, illnesses and even death.

- Label grain bins to warn of entrapment hazards.
- Lock entrances to grain handling areas to keep bystanders and children out.
- Install ladders inside bins.
- Do not enter grain bins that are being loaded or unloaded. Flowing grain can trap and suffocate you in seconds.
- If it is necessary to enter a bin, shut off and lockout power before entering. Use a safety harness and safety line. Have several people available outside the bin to lift entrant out in case of an emergency.
- Wear NIOSH-approved dust-filtering respirators when working in and around grain handling areas. High amounts of dust and molds could be present and are extremely dangerous.
- Wear approved hearing protection when working around noisy equipment, aeration fans, dryers, etc.
- Be very cautious of grain that may have gone out of condition. Crusted grain may have cavities beneath the surface that can collapse, leading to entrapment and suffocation.
- Keep bystanders and children away from grain bins and grain handling equipment.

Inspection

- Are ladders in good condition?
- Is electrical equipment safe?
- Are approved respirators available?
- Is lockout available for power?
- Are overhead power lines near?
- Are guards and shields in place?



What's Cookin: BBQ Meatballs
From the Kitchen of: Lornia Wilson

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 3 lbs ground chuck | 2 tsp chili powder |
| 2 eggs | 1/2 tsp pepper |
| 2 cups of oats | 2 tsp salt |

1 med onion , chopped

Mix all together. Make meatballs a little larger than a walnut.

Line a large pan with a single layer of meatballs.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 cups ketchup | 1/2 cup chopped onion |
| 2 tsp liquid smoke | 1/2 tsp garlic powder |
| 2 cups brown sugar | |

Cook sauce until sugar is dissolved. Pour over meatballs and bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

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

E
Randall Evans, North Mankato
Ted & Becky Evans, Mankato
Randy Ewald, Mankato

Marie Exner, Hopkins
Kathleen R. Falk, Mankato
Kevin J. Feehan, Lexington KY
Edwin & Sharon Fiala, Albuquerque NM
Dennis Ficek, Minneapolis
William Fiebelkorn, Le Sueur
Wilma Fields, Lakeville
Judy Fischer, Le Sueur
Patrick J. Fischer, Eagle Lake
Richard Fisher, Mankato
Jason Flagstad, Mankato
Tim Fletcher, Rockford IL
James Florey Jr., Mankato

Cliff Flowers, St. Joseph MO
Randy Frahm, Eagle Lake
Dwight Frank, St. Peter
Curtis Frack, Mankato
Bradley Frederick, Rochester
Rose Frederick, North Mankato
Ruth Fredericksen, Lake Crystal
Douglas R. Fredericks, Vernon Center
Harvey Freundl, Mankato
Jeffrey Friedrichs, Eagle Lake
David Fritz, Mankato
Denise Froehlich, Wells
Jeff D. Frye, Mankato

Marvin Fuchs, Blue Earth
Kendall Christenson, Mankato
G
Vicki Galstad, Mankato
Michael Georgiana, N. Mankato
Robert Gerber, Storm Lake IA
William J. Geschwind, Eagan
Lynn Gessner, Pemberton
Glen Gibbs, Owatonna
Jeff Gilbertson, Mankato
Paul H. Gislason, Mankato