



NOVEMBER 2019

Volts & Jolts

Published monthly for the members of Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Inc.
SERVING THE FOUR-COUNTY AREA OF MARSHALL, PENNINGTON, RED LAKE AND POLK
and a portion of the lands of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa

HAPPY *Thanksgiving*

*From all of us at
Red Lake Electric Cooperative*

As we gather with our families and friends for Thanksgiving, it is fitting we reflect on the many blessings for which we can be thankful. We all experience misfortunes, but they are few compared with the blessings bestowed on us.



Closed Thanksgiving Day

**Red Lake Electric
Cooperative will be closed
Thursday, Nov. 28
for Thanksgiving**

In case of an electrical outage
or emergency, call the after-hours
phone number, 218-253-2200.



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AFTER HOURS/OUTAGE CALLS 218-253-2200

Website: www.redlakeelectric.com
 Email: info@redlakeelectric.com

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG 1-800-252-1166 or 811

MINNESOTA STATE ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS

Northwest corner of Polk, western Marshall
 and Red Lake Counties:

Wayne Bergstrom – 701-520-9771

Pennington and eastern Marshall Counties:

Ronald Ditsch – 218-779-6758

Most of Polk County:

George Stage – 701-306-3511

Any time you or an electrician does wiring or other electrical work at your home or farm, Minnesota state law requires a state wiring inspector to conduct a proper inspection of the work. A rough-in inspection must be made before any wiring is covered. A final inspection is also required. Please visit www.dli.mn.gov for more information. The inspectors can be reached week-day mornings between 7 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of Red Lake Electric Cooperative to enhance the quality of life for people of our service area by safely and consistently providing quality electric service and other valued services while holding our employees, our community and our environment in high regard.



From the Manager's Desk

by Stephanie Johnson

Local ownership is all about you

As a member of Red Lake Electric Cooperative, you've frequently heard that you're an owner of the co-op. You may have wondered what exactly does this mean?

Most people think of ownership in more individual terms of their personal property, such as a home, car, cabin or boat. While being an owner of your electric cooperative is slightly different, you still receive many valuable benefits that are exclusive to member-owners.

Your voice matters

First and foremost, you have a powerful voice in how RLEC operates. Each year, as part of your co-op's annual meeting, members elect board directors. The directors – who are also members of RLEC – are elected to represent your interests when it comes to setting policies or making decisions on issues that impact the co-op and our members. Every member-owner of the cooperative is eligible to run for the board of directors, provided they meet the minimum qualifications outlined in our bylaws. If you're interested in learning more about this process, visit www.redlakeelectric.com, call or stop by our office. We would be happy to discuss the process with you.

We encourage co-op members to attend our annual meeting, which is held every year in March, and exercise your right to vote as an owner. As part of the annual meeting, you can vote on other essential business items, such as proposed bylaw amendments. We also provide an update on the performance and long-term stability of the cooperative by reviewing financials, infrastructure investments and community involvement. Unlike other utilities – many of which are owned by Wall Street investors – local ownership means individual involvement and your voice in the co-op matters. You can be on a first-name basis with your co-op's general manager, staff and directors because they are part of your community and are your friends and neighbors.

You're building equity

When you own items, such as a home, you're building equity. The same is true of being an owner of RLEC. When you use electricity, you accumulate equity and it's tracked for every member through a capital credits allocation. As a not-for-profit business entity, we meticulously track revenue and expenses. At the end of the year, if our business expenses are less than our income, the excess goes to our members based on the amount of electricity you've used. These funds are allocated to your account and returned over time when the board determines it's financially feasible to do so. To date, RLEC has returned close to \$14 million to our members. When other types of utilities have margins, the profits are returned to investors.

Your co-op knows you

About one in 10 Americans receives power the way you do, from a locally owned electric cooperative. There are more than 900 electric co-ops across the country, and 50 of those co-ops are providing safe, reliable, affordable and increasingly clean power to Minnesota members like you. Because each co-op belongs to the people who live there, the co-op listens to the community it serves. Whether it's working with the latest energy efficiency technologies or keeping the electric grid safe (22118 Vergil H. Aubol) and secure, RLEC offers solutions that make the most sense locally.

These are just a few of the ways local ownership is all about you – our members!

Veterans Day

To all veterans of all branches, thank you for your sacrifice, your bravery, and the example you set for us all. In short, thank you for your service. Not only should we thank the military every Veterans Day, but we should thank them throughout the year for the service they perform for our country.



From the Office

Sales tax exemption

With the start of the heating season, we want to remind you that residential electric heat during the winter months, as well as electricity used in agricultural production, are exempt from Minnesota sales tax. If you currently have a sales tax exemption form on file with RLEC, you do not need to send us another; however, if you haven't given us a sales tax exemption form, please do so. You will find an exemption form in this issue of Volts & Jolts. It's also on our website or give us a call and we will send you one.



Off-peak meters

Most meters recording off-peak heat usage sit idle all summer. When the electric heat is turned back on, some of the automated meter reading devices (Turtles) don't always start reporting (27931 Karl Bjorkman) kWh usage. We try to detect these; however, if you are using your



off-peak heating system, we ask that you look at your electric bill to be sure you are getting the discounted rate for off-peak usage.

New meters

As we have reported in earlier issues of Volts & Jolts, RLEC is changing our metering system. We currently have 70% of our meters changed to the new system. Just a reminder: if you have an off-peak meter located inside your home or another building that hasn't been replaced, we will need to make arrangements to change that meter. In order to contin-

ue to receive your off-peak rate, your meter will need to be replaced.

Power outage: RLEC's side or member's side?

Whether it's during business hours or our after-hours outage dispatch you hear the question, "Have you checked your breakers? Is there a red light or display on your meter?" These questions are asked to avoid an unexpected after-hours service call to you, the member.

If a breaker is tripped in the house, garage or shop or even at the pole, these are all below the meter. This means the issue falls on the member's side. When a crew is dispatched to the site and it's a tripped breaker, it results in an after-hour service call charge to the member. To avoid this happening to you, we ask that you please just take a couple of minutes to check the breakers in your panels and if you are able, we highly recommend checking the breakers at the pole, in the meter loop. See pictures below to locate your breakers below your meter.



Left photo: Remove the cover on the bottom of the meter loop. The bottom portion does not have a red RLEC seal tag on it.

Right photo: Check to see if the breaker has tripped. If the breaker has tripped, you will need to put the breaker in the "OFF" position and then back to the "ON" position. Pictured is a double throw meter loop: if you have a portable generator, you will shut off the main breaker pictured, side over the guard (right to left) and then turn on the breaker underneath where the guard is pictured.

Recipe Corner



Submit your recipes to be published in *Volts & Jolts*. Email to info@redlakeelectric.com or mail to: Red Lake Electric Cooperative, PO Box 430, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750.

Holiday Honeycrisp Salad

*1/2 cup light vegetable oil
OR extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
1/4 cup unsweetened apple juice or apple cider
2 to 3 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
3 medium Honeycrisp apples (about 1 pound),
thinly sliced
Juice of 1/2 lemon
12 ounces salad greens (spring mix, baby
spinach, arugula, baby romaine, or a
combo of your favorites)
1 cup pecan halves, toasted or candied
3/4 cup dried cranberries or dried cherries
4 ounces crumbled blue cheese*

To prepare apple cider vinaigrette, measure oil, apple cider vinegar, apple juice/cider, honey, lemon juice, salt and pepper into a mason jar. Tightly screw on lid and shake vigorously until everything is thoroughly combined. Alternatively, you may briskly whisk the ingredients together in a medium bowl, or blend them in a blender or mini food processor.

Place apple slices in a large plastic baggie and squeeze (29951 Tiffany Hoyhtya) the fresh lemon juice (from the lemon half) over them. Close bag and shake to coat.

In a large salad bowl, layer salad greens, apple slices, pecans, dried cranberries and blue cheese. Just before serving, dress with desired amount of apple cider vinaigrette and toss until salad ingredients are evenly coated.

Holiday wishes

This is the time of year we are reminded to take the time to count our blessings, one of which is the opportunity to serve you! We wish you a wonderful holiday season!



(Left to right) Minnkota electricians Mike Howard, Mike Vetsch and Jason Sather work to install distribution automation equipment at the Minto substation in eastern North Dakota.



Making our grid smarter

DISTRIBUTION AUTOMATION PROJECT TO IMPROVE OUTAGE RESPONSE, COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

When a power delivery system issue occurs in a rural part of Minnkota's service area, information can be scarce. (Minnkota is your co-op's wholesale and transmission power provider.)

Power system operators in the cooperative's Grand Forks control center are sometimes left to make an educated guess on the right crew and equipment to send out to the scene.

"It usually requires an exploratory trip either by the lineworker in the area or one of our crews to say, oh, this is actually broken. Now let's go get what we need," said Jim Brower, technical maintenance superintendent.

Brower's crews are in the second year of a major effort to bring greater visibility to all corners of Minnkota's transmission and substation delivery system. As a part of the distribution automation program, technologies are being installed at distribution substations that will bring real-time data into Minnkota's control center. Accurate information will help crews respond to outages and other issues more safely and efficiently.

"By receiving real-time data from the substations, we hope to more quickly respond to outages and other power quality issues," Brower said.

Advanced communication to Minnkota's substation sites is made possible by

adding a computer system, known in the industry as SCADA. This system will help gather and analyze data while also monitoring and controlling equipment processes remotely. All new substations have the technology in place.

Building connections

The long-term focus of the distribution automation program is to have advanced communication equipment installed at all 212 of Minnkota's distribution substations in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota. These substations are used to lower voltage so electricity can be safely delivered into local communities by the member cooperatives.

Communication is changing immensely with the installation of the new distribution automation equipment. Before the new technology, cooperatives would receive notice of an outage and investigate potential issues at the substation.

With the new technology, Minnkota knows when a substation is offline and is able to provide additional information to the member.

"We can actually tell our member cooperatives what's going on," Brower said. "At least they know the problem when their member-consumers start calling."

With new distribution automation meters and regulators at several substations,

"By receiving real-time data from the substations, we hope to more quickly respond to outages and other power quality issues."

— Jim Brower, Minnkota technical maintenance superintendent

Minnkota employees can now communicate with the regulator panels. If employees cannot connect to the regulator panel, they know to send technical maintenance personnel out to the site. If they can connect with the panel, they know it's an electrical problem and construction and maintenance crews will then be sent out.

"If we have an issue, the alarm will come into the control center so we know right away, but we can also make a maintenance connection on the devices and interrogate them from here in Grand Forks," Brower said.

About 15 to 18 distribution substations are scheduled to receive the new equipment each year. Minnkota estimates investing (24953 Andy Moran) about \$1 million annually into the program.

"The biggest part of it is getting SCADA visibility to all these load-serving substations," Brower said. "The substations, the voltages, the current on each phase – all that data is available to them."

Ready to respond

Minnkota and its members prepare for winter demand response, estimate normal control hours

Northerners remember the January 2019 polar vortex unkindly – cars that wouldn't start, wind that hurt the skin and dangerous overnight lows.

Fortunately for Minnkota Power Cooperative's service territory of eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota, including Red Lake Electric Cooperative, homes and businesses stayed warm as the power stayed on. Energy teams were able to balance overwhelming electricity needs across the region by leveraging the energy market and demand response – a technique that allows a cooperative to temporarily interrupt service to a member's off-peak loads (electric heating, large-capacity water heaters, electric vehicle chargers, etc.) in exchange for a lower electric rate.

"If you have a polar vortex where there's no wind, or the temperatures are so cold that the wind isn't generating, that is going to result in demand response," explained Todd Sailer, Minnkota senior manager of power supply & resource planning. Sailer added

that wind generators start to shut down somewhere between 20 and 25 below zero, temperatures that the entire Midwest experienced for multiple days.

"The cold temperatures were over a wider area of the country, which put additional stress on our system. That led to higher electrical needs, which resulted in higher energy costs across the region," Sailer said. "Our demand response program was very helpful in the ability for us to not only manage our costs, but also our consumer electricity needs during widespread emergency weather conditions."

Every winter is different, but the planning team projects this year will bring a normal 200-250 hours of estimated demand response. Minnkota is typically able to cover its demand with its own energy resources. However, there are times during planned generator outages, extreme weather events or low wind supply that Minnkota must buy power.

"When the market prices are high, that's when we initiate demand response. We're doing it to

keep costs down," Sailer said.

The demand response system was established to avoid building more generation facilities for peak need that only comes a few times a year. That, in turn, keeps rates low for consumers. By being a part of the off-peak load control program, consumers can also take advantage of an even lower electric rate without any disruption in comfort.

Prepare for the heating season

Sailer says those on the off-peak program need to check their backup heating sources to make sure their fuel tanks are full and functioning. Minnkota will run a demand response test in early December, and members should reach out to Red Lake Electric with (22410 Wayne Stavenes) any questions or concerns before extreme weather hits.

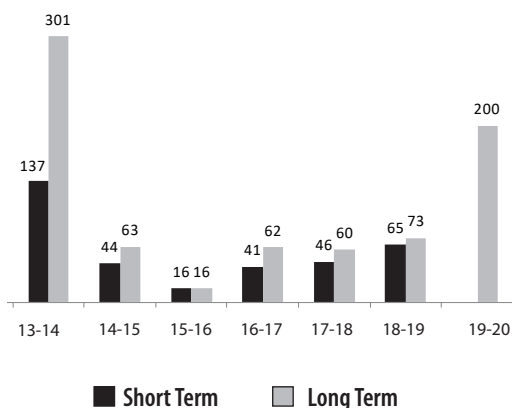
"The polar vortex showed that you need to make sure your systems are working properly so that when we end up in those events, everybody is able to get through it safely and without too much inconvenience," Sailer said.

QUICK TAKES

A look at some statistics from your
Red Lake Electric Cooperative

The chart below shows the amount of control time estimated for Red Lake Electric Cooperative's Off-Peak customers this heating season and a comparison of the seasonal control over the past five years. Off-peak control hours are impacted in a number of ways including weather, variable energy output from Minnkota's wind energy resources and energy availability in the wholesale energy market.

Off-Peak Control Hours



NOTICE OF NAMES

Hidden within the text of the articles of this issue of the *Volts & Jolts* are the names and account numbers of some Red Lake Electric Cooperative members. They will appear within the articles in parentheses as such (9999999.99 Willie Ray Member). If you find your name and account number, clip it out and send it with your next payment. You will be credited with \$5 on your electric bill.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Trim your holiday energy costs by choosing energy efficient LED lights! LED holiday lights use less energy and can last up to 40 seasons. They're also easier to install – you can connect up to 25 LED strings without overloading a wall socket!

Source: *energy.gov*



Like us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/redlakeelectric

Take control of your account with SmartHub!



Now you can see your daily and monthly usage, pay/view your bill online, plus a whole host of other useful services with SmartHub. SmartHub is a free and secure online energy portal at www.redlakeelectric.com that allows members to do the following things:

- View daily and monthly energy use.
- View and pay your bills online.
- Go paperless and receive an email notice when your bill is ready to view.
- Compare energy use to changes in temperature.



Scan the QR code
for online access to
SmartHub

If you have questions regarding SmartHub, call us at 218-253-2168
or send an email to info@redlakeelectric.com.

Electrical safety and conservation websites

The following is a list of websites that can provide information and education in reference to electrical safety and energy conservation. These websites are listed as links on Red Lake Electric's website at www.redlakeelectric.com.

- Electrical Safety Foundation International: www.esfi.org
- Alliance to Save Energy: www.ase.org
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov/greenhomes
- Energy Star: www.energystar.gov
- Minnesota Safety Council: www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org
- Safe Electricity: www.safeelectricity.org
- Lighting Controls Association: www.aboutlightingcontrols.org
- U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission: www.cpsc.gov



ELECTRIC HEAT EXEMPTION

This is to certify that the primary source of heat for my residence is electricity and I am eligible for the electric heating sales tax exemption as provided by Minnesota State Law. The primary source is the source that supplies more heat than any other source for the largest period of time during the heating season.

Date _____ Account Number _____

Social Security Number _____

Signature _____

Cards of Thanks

Red Lake Electric reserves the right to edit thank you notes when being published.



Dear RLEC,

Thank you for sponsoring Champion Breeding Ewe at the fair. I really appreciate the things that you guys do for the community.

Kale Geiser

Thank you for sponsoring the goat trophy award. My goat, Susie, won it. She is 6 years old and last year gave almost 3,000 pounds in production! I was happy that she was honored.

Eva Hurlburt

Thank you for sponsoring the award for my poultry project at the Red Lake County fair. I appreciated it.

Hailey Hanson

Thank you for the scholarship I received for graduation. It is greatly appreciated and will greatly help in paying for my schooling at M State in Wadena.

Jaden Kiesow, Grygla High School

I would like to thank you for the scholarship. I am very honored. I will be attending the University of Minnesota Crookston, majoring in agricultural systems management and minoring in agronomy and horticulture. I am very grateful for your generous donation.

Jessica Olson

Thank you so much for the very generous scholarship! I really appreciate it; it will help aid in the high cost of college and allow me to focus on my studies. I will attend NDSU for electrical engineering, and I am very excited to continue on my journey.

Abby Kiesow

Thank you for the scholarship. I am honored. With your help I will be able to focus on my education. I hope one day to reflect your generosity in the community.

Elysa Christensen

Thank you for the Red Lake Electric scholarship. It will help me with my education at Northland Community and Technical College.

Isaac Eskeli

We greatly appreciate everyone who helped us when our power went out due to the "winter-like" weather we received.

Thank you to all of you who keep out "lights on" every day and night. God bless you and stay safe!

Tim and Cathy Gilleland of Huot

Dear RLEC Trust,

Thank you for very generous donation to our Red Lake County unit of the American Cancer Society. This money will go to cancer patients in our county to help with their travel expenses.

*RLC Board of the
American Cancer Society*

On behalf of the Plummer fire department, I would like to thank you for the generous donation. This grant will be used to purchase a laptop computer and projector for our fire department. They will be used during classroom training, improving the learning experience of our firefighters.

Wade Westlake, Fire Chief

Thank you so much for the recent Operation Round Up grant you awarded us, which will benefit the Marshall County Christmas (20759 Ruth Tostrup) projects. Your gift is appreciated and will be used to help fund the Christmas Sharing Tree and Food Basket projects.

*Stacey Urbaniak, Marshall County
Social Services, Case Aide*

On behalf of the Red Lake Falls fire department, I would like to thank you for your recent donation through the Round Up grant. The funds will go toward the purchase of adequate portable lighting. The Operation Round Up grant program is a great program that benefits many organizations.

Karl Kleven, Fire Chief

The Veterans Memorial Park Committee wishes to extend a heartfelt thank you for your generous donation to the Marshall County Area Veterans Memorial Park! Through community philanthropy, the Marshall County area will be able to create a central place to celebrate, and honor all veterans! Together we are making this park a reality to honor our veterans from Marshall County and the surrounding area for generations to come!

Cindy Anderson, Vets Park Treasurer

FEDERAL/STATE ENERGY ASSISTANCE

If you need help paying your electric utility bill, you may qualify for state or federal fuel assistance. For complete qualification and application information, contact your local county welfare or community/citizen's action council listed below. These organizations may also provide budget counseling.

Inter-County Community Council

Oklee, MN
Serves East Polk, Pennington
and Red Lake Counties
218-796-5144
Toll-free: 1-888-778-4008
Fax: 218-796-5175

Northwest Community Action

Badger, MN
Serves East Marshall County
218-528-3258
Toll-free: 1-800-568-5329
Fax: 218-528-3259

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council

Crookston, MN
Serves West Polk and
West Marshall Counties
218-281-9080
Toll-free: 1-866-264-3729
Fax: 218-281-0705

Red Lake Community Action Agency

Red Lake, MN
Serves Beltrami County
218-679-1880

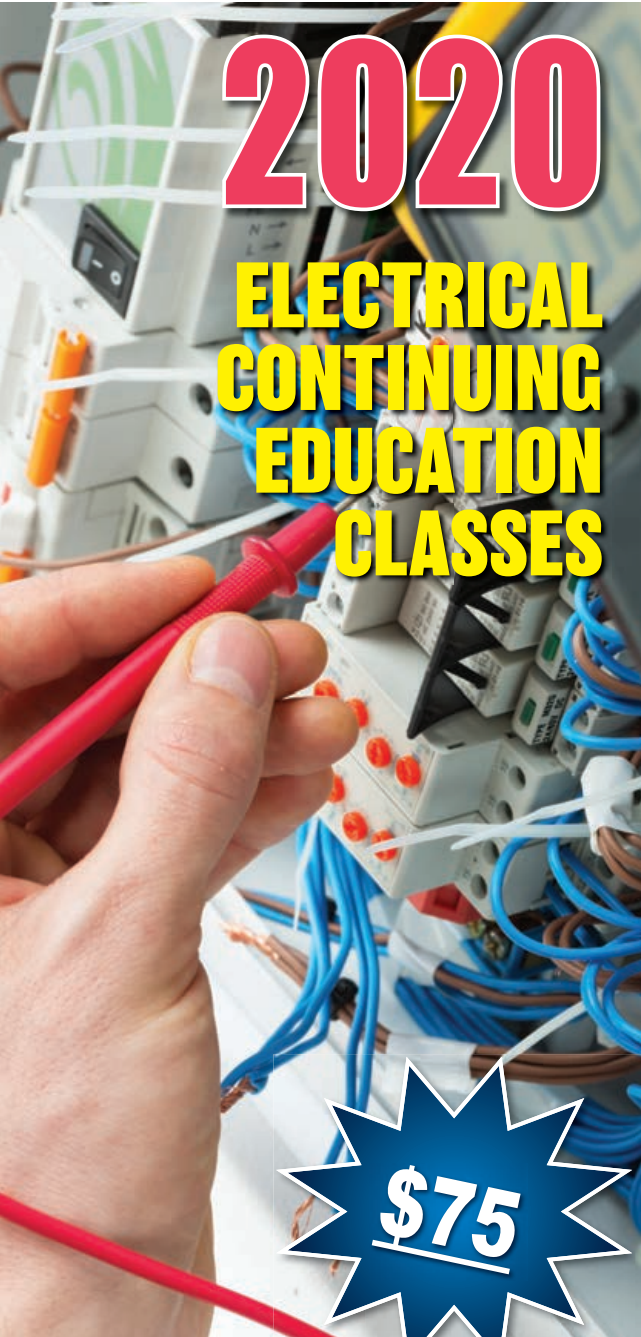
CLASSIFIEDS

**Members are invited to use
this FREE WANT AD service.**

If you have anything to trade or sell, just drop a card to Red Lake Electric Cooperative, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750.

Looking to Buy

International Scout 4-wheel drive truck, 1965-80 model, and a D6 Cat. Call Craig at 218-681-0468.



2020 ELECTRICAL CONTINUING EDUCATION CLASSES

\$75

Electrical contractor continuing education sessions set

Minnkota Power Cooperative and Red Lake Electric Cooperative will again provide an opportunity for area electricians to obtain credits for license renewal by attending one of the six continuing education classes being offered throughout the region.

This marks the 32nd year of the successful program, which is aimed at providing area trade allies (25896 Kevin Yaggie) with the latest information on electrical code and practices.

The electrical workshops will be held Jan. 8 and Jan. 9 at the Holiday Inn in Fargo. The training then moves to the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls on Jan. 14, and the Eagles Club in Bemidji on Jan. 23. The workshops conclude with classes Feb. 4 and Feb. 5 at Minnkota Power Cooperative's headquarters in Grand Forks.

The registration fee is \$75 for eight code credits. Taking the class on multiple days will not qualify for 16 code credits. Registration can be done online at www.minnkota.com. Registration must be completed at least seven days prior to the seminar.

For residential building contractor continuing education workshops, contact your local home builders association.

For more information about the program, call (701) 795-4292 or e-mail questions to contractortraining@minnkota.com.

Dates and Locations

Fargo - Wednesday, Jan. 8

Holiday Inn, 701.282.2700
3803 13th Ave South
Fargo, ND 58103

Bemidji - Thursday, Jan. 23

Eagles Club, 218.751.9985
1270 Neilson Ave SE
Bemidji, MN 56601

Fargo - Thursday, Jan. 9

Holiday Inn, 701.282.2700
3803 13th Ave South
Fargo, ND 58103

Grand Forks - Tuesday, Feb. 4

Minnkota Power Cooperative, 701.795.4292
5301 32nd Ave South
Grand Forks, ND 58201

Fergus Falls - Tuesday, Jan. 14

Bigwood Event Center, 218.739.2211
925 Western Ave
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

Grand Forks - Wednesday, Feb. 5

Minnkota Power Cooperative, 701.795.4292
5301 32nd Ave South
Grand Forks, ND 58201