

# NORTHERN

L I G H T S



**Beltrami Electric  
Cooperative Inc.**

® Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

March 2015

*Osprey habitat story*

**Perfect perch**

*pages 4-5*



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Monday – Friday

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General Manager	Lynette Nieuwsma
Editor	Sam Mason

### Minnesota State Electrical Inspectors

*Beltrami and Clearwater Counties*  
**Davis Smid**  
507-227-2772 - [mntristate@gmail.com](mailto:mntristate@gmail.com)

*Cass and Hubbard Counties*  
**Steve Schauland**  
218-652-2213 or fax 218-333-0451

*These are the inspectors covering the area served by Beltrami Electric. They can be reached by phone Monday through Friday between 7 and 8:30 a.m. or by fax or email as indicated.*

### Gopher State One Call 1-800-252-1166 or 811

Anyone who plans to dig is required by law to notify the state of their intentions at least 48 hours in advance.

All digging requires the 48-hour notification so that buried telephone line, television cable, pipelines, utility electrical lines, municipal water and sewer lines can be located to ensure that none will be severed or damaged.

**ON THE COVER:** Two students from Bemidji High School place sticks on a 40-foot-tall osprey nesting platform installed by Minnkota Power Cooperative, our wholesale power provider.



## Across the MANAGER'S DESK

Lynette Nieuwsma, General Manager

The 2015 Minnesota legislative session is well underway. On the energy front it has been relatively quiet at the time of my writing this column. However, a lot changes from day to day during the legislative session. By the time you read this, many new bills will have been introduced. On Feb. 17, during our MREA annual meeting, we visited with our legislators to help them understand our viewpoint. Minnesota electric cooperatives have legislation we are promoting and also some bills we will be watching. As of early February these are the issues we are following:

**State FEMA reimbursement** – Electric cooperatives support efforts to streamline the state's disaster relief response to avoid the need for special sessions. We also believe member-owned electric cooperatives should have access to state disaster funds to help our communities rebuild after natural disasters, on the same basis as municipal utilities do. Damage to electric co-op lines is included in the calculation that triggers FEMA disaster declarations and we are eligible for federal assistance. This process should not be encumbered. We strongly support HF484/SF599, which provides electric cooperatives access to state relief funds and also allows a cooperative that experiences damage in a county that was not included in a FEMA disaster declaration to include that damage when applying for assistance.

**DNR Crossing application fees** – In recent years application fees to cross DNR land have accelerated to \$3,500 per crossing. This is a significant expense for Beltrami Electric members who need to cross a bike path or other DNR land when building a new service. In the 2014 legislative session, the DNR was given an appropriation that was intended to

exempt utilities from this fee. However, the fix we thought we had was backed away from by the DNR. A bill sponsored by Sen. Skoe would eliminate this fee.

**Move over legislation** – We will be introducing legislation that would require drivers to 'move over and/or slow down' when a utility vehicle is working on lines on the side of the road. We hope that all of our efforts in this session will help Minnesota's electric cooperatives to continue to provide safe and reliable energy to their members, while ensuring safety to the public and our employees when working close to the road.

**Stray voltage** – Minnesota continues to lead the country in the number of electric cooperatives with stray voltage cases in court. To ensure that knowledgeable persons provide information in these cases, HF400/SF563 will require if someone is going to provide expert testimony about the way a utility's system is engineered, they need to be a licensed electrical engineer. We believe this common-sense requirement will deter some of the questionable "consultants" pushing these cases.

**Net Metering** – Current net metering mandates that retail kWh credit be given to each kWh generated. This allows net-metered customers to avoid paying for the infrastructure that provides them with electricity when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing, and shifts those costs onto other cooperative members. The cost of building and maintaining the grid is part of the cost built into the kWh that the net-metered member receives full credit for. We are working toward legislative corrections that have the following principles:

- **Fair to all members:** Net metering and distributed generation should be cost-neutral for all of our members.

- **Pay for infrastructure:** Net-metered customers have a responsibility to pay for the services they use. They continue to rely on the infrastructure, assets and power supply of the local cooperative whenever their generation isn't producing energy – i.e., when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing. They also use that same infrastructure to “store” their excess energy when they don't need it and to distribute it to the grid.
- **Size to load:** Generation should be properly sized to a consumer's load. The current retail payment provisions may incentivize producers to oversize their load to generate as much electricity as possible, rather than

simply offsetting their own use.

In an effort to put those principles into play, HF655/SF808 would provide for the option of rolled over credits that would expire after one year or that excess energy be paid at avoided cost.

**District meetings** – Normally our district meetings are held in March and you would be seeing information in this issue of the *Northern Lights*. Due to a change in our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting and open house being held June 24 at our headquarters, this requires us to move our district meetings to May to adhere to our bylaws, which require they be held within a specific time frame before the annual meeting.

Talking about our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary,

I want to remind you that we are continuing to look for old cooperative photos, memorabilia and stories to share. We are not only looking for history, but also the stories on how electricity changed your life. If you have anything you would like to share with us, please call Angela Lyseng at 218-444-3689, or email [alyseng@beltramielectric.com](mailto:alyseng@beltramielectric.com). I look forward to seeing what our members dig up. In particular, I would like to hear from those of you who remember when Beltrami Electric first brought electricity to your farm or home. What a day it must have been. My own father who is 93 remembers it well as I'm sure a few of you do.

Cooperatively yours, *Angela Lyseng*

## Lignite Education Seminar: Energy, Economics & Environment

June 15 - 18, 2015 APPLY TODAY <http://www.lignite.com/teachers>

Registration is now open for the Lignite Energy Council's 30<sup>th</sup> annual Teacher Education Seminar: Energy, Economics and Environment. The four-day seminar gives elementary, middle and high school teachers in North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota and Montana a firsthand look at North Dakota's fifth largest industry, lignite mining and related energy production. The seminar will be held June 15-18, 2015, at Bismarck State College's National Energy Center of Excellence, Bismarck, N.D.

“Teachers from all grade and subject levels should apply before April 10, 2015, but the earlier the better as the seminar does fill up fast,” said Kay LaCoe, Lignite Energy Council communications and education coordinator. “One of the biggest draws of our seminar is that it offers two graduate credits paid for by the Lignite Energy Council, not to mention the popular tours of lignite facilities such as a lignite mine and power plant.”

Teachers who attend and complete a lesson plan can choose from one of three North Dakota institutions from which to receive their graduate credits: University of North Dakota, North Dakota State University and Minot State University.

Minnkota Power Cooperative sponsors 10 teachers from its service area by reimbursing participants round-trip mileage to the seminar in Bismarck. Rooms are provided at Bismarck State College at no charge.

The seminar provides instruction on these topics and more: history, geology, land reclamation, environmental protection, economics of the lignite industry, the need for more workers, energy conservation and transmission. Besides the classroom instruction and the tours, teachers will take home handouts, videos, coal samples and activities that can be used in the classroom. The online application for all teachers is available at <http://www.lignite.com/teachers>.



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### LOCAL PARTICIPATING AGENTS

- Teals in Cass Lake
- CVS in Bemidji
- Walmart in Bemidji

# Perfect perch



From 40 feet up in a bucket truck, Tony Todavich, a junior at Bemidji High School, places sticks on the osprey nesting platform Minnkota installed Jan. 28 near Bemidji, Minn.

## *Minnkota teams with students, DNR to build osprey habitat*

**T**he family of ospreys built their nest in what seemed like a perfect spot. There was a tall perch, lake access in every direction and plenty of fish to go around.

But there was one big problem.

The nest was atop a power pole, and its proximity to cables transmitting 69,000 volts of electricity endangered the birds and threatened the safety and reliability of the electric system. When the ospreys migrated south for the winter, it was time to make a change.

Minnkota Power Cooperative, Beltrami Electric's wholesale power provider, worked with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to remove the nest in an environmentally responsible manner and then teamed with Bemidji High School to build a new nesting platform.

About 30 students from the school's environmental science class got a firsthand look at the new nesting habitat Jan. 28 following its installation. The class traveled by bus to the site, located a few miles north of Bemidji along Beltrami County Road 15, and watched Minnkota line workers set a utility pole and attach the platform roughly 40 feet in the air.

Several students were then fitted with safety equipment and invited to ride with a Minnkota line worker in a bucket truck to view the platform and place sticks from the original nest on it.

The first student up was junior Tony Todavich, who helped construct and weld the 40-inch square metal platform as part of a class project with materials provided by Minnkota. He and many others will see the platform because of its location along a well-traveled county road near Newby's market.

"I drive by here a few times a week, so I'll be able to see it," Todavich said. "It's kind of nice to know that everybody who uses this road is going to see it, too. I like helping the community and helping the ecosystem."

Principal Brian Stefanich was contacted in the fall regarding the school's interest in participating in the project. He said it was a great opportunity for his students to be involved in a community activity.

"This was an excellent hands-on learning experience from the beginning of the process to the end," Stefanich said.

### Finding a solution

While there had not been any known incidents related to osprey nesting activity in the area, Minnkota began receiving word from the public that a nest was sitting in a precarious position on a structure.

The cooperative has an avian protection policy and program in place to ensure its power delivery systems are meeting all applicable environmental requirements.

"An inspection by our outpost lineman indicated that the nest could be a problem – both for the birds and for us in terms of power outages and other hazards," said Matt Reule, Minnkota transmission line superintendent. "The ospreys could have come in contact with the line or the sticks from their nest could very easily start a fire."

The nest was removed by Minnkota line workers in December 2014 during a non-nesting period to avoid disturbing the ospreys. A triangular plastic deterrent was then installed to discourage future nesting on top of the power pole.

### New home

The nesting platform was installed on a voluntary basis. All work was performed under the guidelines of a permit obtained from the DNR.

"While they are not required to, some power companies go above and beyond their duty to help the birds and put up a new structure," said Christine Herwig, DNR regional nongame wildlife specialist. "A platform may provide a more attractive



Jason Uhlir, Minnkota safety and physical security manager, explains the basics of the project to a group of Bemidji High School students.



Bemidji High School students Jake Larson and Tony Todavich put on safety harnesses and other equipment as they prepare to ride in Minnkota's bucket truck to view the nesting platform.

nesting structure. It also provides a much safer platform for the birds to build their nest and raise a new family of young ospreys."

Herwig said that the ospreys often prefer a man-made structure because of its stability. Locations near water are also popular for the bird, which subsists mostly on fish.

Minnkota, the DNR and the students will have to wait and see if the birds arrive this spring to claim the new spot. It will be hard to find better amenities – a tall perch, nearby lakefront access and a durable platform complete with starter sticks for a new nest.

"It's a great spot because it's right on top of a knoll and it's near a lot of lakes," Herwig said.

# Northern Lights CLASSIFIEDS

## For Sale:

1975 14' Lund Boat and a 7.5 hp Evinrude Motor with trailer. Boat is dry and looks good, motor runs very well, comes with canvas cover, 2 swivel seats, gas tank, anchor and smaller steel boatlift. Lift fits boat well and would work for any Jet Ski. \$1,200 or obo. Pictures are available, call 701-213-7363.

Electric ice auger, 12-volt marine deep cycle batteries, carbon monoxide detectors (some new, some used), propane in 100-lb. cylinders, call 218-224-2836.

Crib with new mattress and bedding \$75, musical crib toy \$3, pack-n-play \$20, older baby swing \$5, baby bath seat \$5, walker \$10, new outside patio swing \$15, johnny jump up \$5, bouncy infant chair \$10, or \$135 for all cash only, call 444-7308.

Black glass display cabinet backlit \$30, round oak table \$25, TV stand \$10, tan love seat \$30, blue/oak swivel rocker \$10, oak mantel 5-ft \$15, charcoal grills \$10/\$15, Herend figurine \$50, Amager girl figurine \$50, 751-9311/368-9034.

2004 Ford F150 4-door extended cab, 4-wheel drive, automatic, 131,000 miles, good, dependable truck, \$8,500, call Kevin 218-766-2395.

'Celotex' Thermax sheathing for use as a heat shield and 1/8" wood paneling (mock birch), assorted lengths and widths, call Steve 224-1699.

Bowflex Ultimate fitness machine excellent condition fully loaded, with owner's manual, \$1,000, call 218-243-2663.

Never used/installed "Magestic 36" Designer right corner gas fireplace - \$2,250 obo, similar/this year's like model valued over \$5k but open to ALL reasonable offers. Can text or email pictures, comes with pipe sections, misc. to install, call 218-407-3881.

Clam fish trap like new (X2-Thermal) w/hitch, skies, cover, center console, lights, battery, etc., asking \$850, call 218-368-5264.

Firewood, poplar and balsam, cut 18" to 24" long, you haul \$50 per pickup load, call 218-586-2839.

2000 Freightliner FLD120 with approximately 680,000 miles, \$15,000 or best offer, call 218-556-3215.

Stationary portion for an Anderson 96" sliding

glass door, never been used, 3-blade stainless steel propeller for a 350-cubic-inch GM motor, 15 1/4" diameter, 19" pitch, never been used, call 218-987-2410.

Maple dining table set, seats 4 but expands for 10, has 4 side chairs plus 1 capt. chair, also has table cover pads, excellent condition, est. new \$1,200, asking \$395, 218-586-2484.

Antlers of all types, sizes and conditions! New, dusty, old, rotten, mark.fuller@freeberggrund.com, 218-556-8570.

66-inch ATV snowplow, new, full-size punching bag, \$20, 218-987-2932.

16-ft. Alumacraft lunger boat with Spartan trailer. Yamaha Kodiak 400 with extras, 218-497-0231.

Noritake china in the Savannah pattern, includes 16 each of dinner, luncheon, bread and butter plates, and cups and saucers, 12 soup/salad bowls, 12 dessert bowls, 3 platters, 4 serving bowls, gravy boat, creamer and sugar bowl, coffee server, asking \$800, call 759-2322.

1997 Arctic Cat, Panther - 2up, 440 engine, reverse, electric start, helmet and cloth cover, not sure of the mileage, carburetors just tuned up, \$2,000/obo, no trailer, stored in garage on Gull Lake west of Tenstrike, call 218-444-3468 and talk to Herb.

Refurbished two-bedroom mobile home 14x60 with air conditioner, location is Westwood Acres Mobile Home Park in Bemidji \$7,500, call 218-760-9415.

Price reduced! Detroit Diesel 8V71 engine w/ Allison HT740 transmission, removed from MCI-9 bus on Sept. 5, 2014, excellent condition, video of it running in the bus available on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/Wo7HnJNRhdM>, approx. 29,000 miles on engine rebuild, all rebuild invoices available for review, motor and tranny have had routine maintenance and very well cared for, references available, \$6,000/obo, 218-759-9713.

## Wanted:

Military items and old shotguns. If no answer, please leave message, 218-333-3543.

Mid '90s 3/4-ton Dodge or Ford pickup, regular cab, also a log splitter, 218-987-2932.

## Classified ads rules

For sale and wanted items only. 50 words or 300 characters, maximum length. No rental, business, service, real estate or personal ads. Ads are published on a first-come, first-serve basis and are free to Beltrami Electric members. Due to space constraints, there is no guarantee your ad will appear. Limited to one "for sale" and one "wanted" ad per issue. Repeat ads are only allowed for three consecutive months. The ad deadline is the first of the month to be included in the next issue. For example, an ad received March 1 would be included in the April issue due out the end of March. An ad received March 2 would be included in the May issue due out the end of April. Ads are preferred to be submitted via the web at [www.beltramielctric.com](http://www.beltramielctric.com) or via email at [info@beltramielctric.com](mailto:info@beltramielctric.com), but may be submitted by mail, phone or in person at the cooperative. All telephone numbers are presumed to have a 218 area code unless otherwise noted.

## NORTHERN SAFETY & SECURITY

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## Beltrami Electric 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration scheduled for June 24

As part of our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary we are requesting that members' who have old photos or stories of when they first received electricity in their home to please contact Angela Lyseng at 218-444-3689, or email her at [alyseng@beltramielctric.com](mailto:alyseng@beltramielctric.com).



## Beltrami Electric's Indoor Garage Sale to Benefit the United Way of the Bemidji Area is coming May 2!

Booth reservations will open on Thursday, March 5, and will be accepted until all 78 booths have been filled. If interested, come in to our office at 4111 Technology Dr. in Bemidji and sign up or contact Cammie at 444-3675 or [cvogel@beltramielectric.com](mailto:cvogel@beltramielectric.com).

### VENDOR SPACES FILL UP FAST!



## Board Meeting Highlights

Beltrami Electric's board of directors conducted its monthly meeting Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2015. All directors were present. Also present were General Manager Lynette Nieuwsma, Director of Finance and Member Services Sid Sletten and Executive Secretary Kay Olson.

#### The following reports were given:

- The manager gave the year-end 2014 report. Nonoperating margins were also discussed.
- Sid Sletten reviewed the December and year-end financial and statistical report, including work order inventories.
- Dan Edens reviewed all vehicle and lost-time accidents for 2014.
- Rich Riewer presented an amendment to the Work Plan and discussed FEMA mitigation funds/reimbursement.
- The MREA District 1 meeting held Jan. 16, 2015, was discussed.
- Terry Diffley reported on the last Minnkota board meeting.

#### The following actions were taken:

- Approved to record 2014 nonoperating margins, with the exception of G&T margins, as permanent, nonallocated equity as provided for under Article 6 Section 8 of the bylaws.
- Approved Minnesota All Hazard Mitigation Plan and Rural Electric Annex Resolution.
- All directors were appointed as delegates to the Minnkota and Square Butte annual meetings.
- Approved revised Policy #401 and #402.
- Designated Jerry Larson to attend the legislative conference in Washington, D.C.

The next board meeting will be Feb. 20, 2015, beginning at 9 a.m.

### Notice to cogenerators

In compliance with Minnesota Adopted Rules Relating to Cogeneration and Small Power Production, Chapter 7835, Beltrami Electric Cooperative is required to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers that satisfy the conditions of a Qualifying Facility.

Beltrami Electric has available and will provide free information to all interested members regarding rates and interconnection requirements. An application for interconnection is required for a Qualifying Facility to interconnect and operate in parallel with the cooperative's distribution system and is subject to approval by the cooperative.

Any disputes over interconnections, sales and purchases are subject to resolution by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. For more information, please call Sam Mason at 218-444-2540.

## 2015 ANNUAL CONTRACTOR UPDATE

Beltrami Electric Cooperative's annual contractor update and dinner will be held at 5 p.m., Thursday, March 5, 2015, at the Bemidji Eagles Club. Contractors please RSVP by **March 2** to Bob Gregg by emailing [gregg@beltramielectric.com](mailto:gregg@beltramielectric.com) or call 218-444-3622. A social hour and dinner will begin at 5 p.m., with the program scheduled for 6 p.m. The agenda features presentations regarding the "PowerSavers" conservation program, load management, rate update and new services constructions. Also, any questions contractors have can be addressed. This meeting is often attended by building, electrical and heating (HVAC) contractors.

## Statement of Operations Year-to-date: December 2014

	December 2013	December 2014
Operating Revenue.....	\$ 49,171,144	\$ 50,003,609
Cost of Purchased Power .....	\$ 33,726,872	\$ 34,081,852
Other Operating Expenses .....	\$ 13,296,957	\$ 15,398,062
Total Cost .....	\$ 47,023,829	\$ 49,479,914
Operating Margin .....	\$ 2,147,315	\$ 523,695
Interest Income.....	\$ 153,287	\$ 198,663
Other Margins .....	\$ 698,780	\$ 808,435
Total Margins .....	\$ 2,999,382	\$ 1,530,793
kWh Purchased .....	497,994,724	497,514,420
kWh Sold .....	471,046,710	478,645,659
Meters Billed.....	20,455	20,515



my meter

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## Bemidji Area Reading Canines (BARC) wins 2015 Statewide Touchstone Energy® Community Award

**STATEWIDE  
AWARD!**

**B**emidji Area Reading Canines (BARC) accepted the 2015 statewide Minnesota's Touchstone Energy® Community Award during the Minnesota Rural Electric Association's annual meeting in St. Paul, Minn., on February 18. Volunteers from the organization accompanied by therapy dogs received the honor in front of an audience of electric cooperative directors and CEOs. In addition to an engraved plaque, the organization received \$1,000 to further its efforts.

The Bemidji Area Reading Canines program was created to help school-aged children feel comfortable reading aloud to a nonjudgmental audience, which in this case are well-trained therapy dogs. The students are encouraged to read to the dogs, while they lay next to them and provide comfort and companionship, in what could be an otherwise nervous atmosphere for some children. There are currently 18 teams comprised of current and retired teachers, professionals, farmers and homemakers who volunteer their time to visit local schools, libraries and youth clubs with the goal of promoting reading. The program started in 2007, impacting thousands of students around the area since its inception.

Here's a great story from the group's application:

### Bemidji Boys and Girls Club

A boy brought over a Dr. Seuss book and started reading "Are You My Mother?" to the dog. He was about a quarter through the book when someone told him his ride was there for him. He turned to the handler over the still opened book and said, "I have to leave. Will you please finish reading the story to the dog so he can find out what happens?" Of course, the handler said, "Yes," and thanked him for reading to the dog.



In its 11<sup>th</sup> year, the Touchstone Energy® Community Award recognizes individuals or organizations for outstanding contributions to their community. Bemidji Area Reading Canines is the second community group nominated by Beltrami Electric to take home the statewide prize, which is selected from all the local award winners throughout the state.

The Bemidji Area Take a Kid Fishing group was the first organization nominated by Beltrami Electric to receive the statewide prize back in 2013.

"Bemidji Area Reading Canines should be commended for not only winning our cooperative's local award, but for earning the statewide honor as well," said Beltrami Electric CEO Lynette Nieuwsma, who presented the award to the group. "Their commitment to community is something we value as a Touchstone Energy® cooperative."

Beltrami Electric Cooperative is a member-owned electric distribution cooperative located in Bemidji, Minn. Established in 1940 and celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, Beltrami Electric provides power to almost 17,000 member-owners within a 3,000-square-mile service area located in the lakes region of north-central Minnesota.