

NORTHERN

L I G H T S



April 2024



NATIONAL LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY - APRIL 8, 2024

Their work is unforgiving. Their stakes are high. Their hours are long.
Their mission is service. Their commitment is enduring.
Our gratitude is eternal.

THANK A BELTRAMI ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LINEWORKER:

Adam Huot
Amy Pillsbury
Bruce Huderle
Chase Todavich
Chris Thronson

Dustin Steigauf
Eric Splichal
Glenn Grundmeier
Jared Vanasse
Jerry Solheim

Kasey Kampfer
Lee Pemberton
Logan Mystic
Matt Roberts
Nick Zimmer

Rich Harris
Ron Komulainen
Ryan Rogers
Steve Lapos
Tanner Turn

Taylor Schmidt
Travis Voelkner
Trent Berglund
Trevor Gwiazdon
William Haman



Legislative update

by Jared Echternach, president and CEO



Permitting

With the carbon free by 2040 bill that passed last session, the energy committees are focused on proposals to better align the permitting process with the demands of the clean energy transition mandated by the legislature. SF4784 would make the permitting process more efficient.

No new mandates

Several bills have been introduced that would impose mandates on cooperatives if passed. HF 3895 would impose certain requirements on cooperative governance boards related to public meetings, board elections and information dissemination. We feel co-ops are best governed by their members and not legislators in St. Paul.

Property tax on co-op distribution infrastructure (SF1242/HF1171)

Over the past few years, the Department of Revenue has begun to exclude co-op-owned rural meters and streetlights (attachments and appurtenances) from a rural electrification property tax exemption that has been in place since 1939. A hearing on a property tax clarification bill with language solidifying our exemption was held in late February. We are optimistic the bill will be included in the Governor's tax bill.

Efficiency and Conservation Optimization Act (ECO) (SF4562/HF4574)

Several years ago, the legislature updated the

state's Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) renaming it the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Optimization Act (ECO). The ECO Act was intended to create greater flexibility in utility energy efficiency and conservation programs and change the primary focus of the program from a spending program to a savings program. SF4562/HF4574 would streamline the administrative burden of ECO and allow incentives for efficient fuel switching.

Excavation (SF2723/HF2717)

This bill would change the process for locating underground utilities for excavation projects, a major concern for utilities. We will continue to monitor this to ensure utility locating is done safely and your cooperative is not put at risk from changes to existing statutes.

Nuclear

The Senate Energy Committee heard SF 3120, which requires the Department of Commerce to conduct a study evaluating the potential costs, benefits and impacts of advanced nuclear reactors operating in Minnesota.

We continue to engage on your behalf on issues affecting your cooperative. I'm pleased to report that our local legislators are very supportive of your electric cooperative. Thank you, Sen. Green, Sen. Utke, Sen. Eichorn, Rep. Bliss and Rep. Grossell for your support.

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Beltrami Electric Cooperative's board conducted its regular monthly meeting Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024. A quorum of directors was in attendance.



The following reports were given at the meeting:

- President and CEO Echternach and the board discussed recent safety successes and observations. For the past two years, Beltrami Electric has had zero lost-time injuries.
- President and CEO Echternach made his monthly report, including America's Electric Cooperative's PAC, legislative issues affecting the cooperative, franchise fee, rate analysis, audit, Home Energy Expo and Operation Round Up®.

- President and CEO Echternach presented a resolution regarding lease agreements.
- Arlene Hogquist presented January's financial report.
- Arlene Hogquist presented the cooperative's Balanced Performance Scorecard.
- President and CEO Echternach reviewed the cooperative's Political Action Plan.
- Directors and President and CEO Echternach discussed upcoming meetings and events.

The following actions were taken at the meeting:

- Approved the consent agenda.
- Nominated Rick Coe as the Minnkota Power director.
- Nominated Murl Nord as the Square Butte director.
- Approved a resolution supporting lease agreements.
- Appointed Jared Echternach as the NISC annual meeting voting delegate and Sharon Lembke as the alternate.

- Approved the 2024 district meetings.
- Approved director and President and CEO expenses.

The next board meeting will be held Tuesday, April 30, 2024.

- **DISTRICT 9**, Monday, June 24, at 6 p.m., Lakeport Fire/Township Hall
- **DISTRICT 7**, Wednesday, June 26, at 6 p.m., Nary Community Hall, Helga Township
- **DISTRICT 3**, Thursday, June 27, at 6 p.m., Beltrami Electric Cooperative Community Room



Small Change, Big Impact: Beltrami Electric's Operation Round Up® transforms communities

The “power of change” has been at work in BEC’s service area since 2016, thanks to the generosity of members who participate in our Operation Round Up® (ORU) program.

Participating members volunteer to have their monthly electric bill rounded up to the next dollar, contributing the excess change to the charitable ORU Trust. Operation Round Up allows co-op members to pool their resources to make a substantial impact on our local communities.

The impact of BEC’s Operation Round Up program resonates across a wide spectrum of community needs. Members’ contributions have funded essential equipment for police K-9 and fire departments, supported educational initiatives and extracurricular programs for students, and provided financial assistance to organizations such as Scouts, Beltrami County Historical Society, Headwaters Science Center and local food shelves.

Among the beneficiaries of the program is the North Country First Responders (NCFR), a dedicated group of volunteers trained as Emergency Medical Responders (EMR) and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT). Since 1992, the NCFR has been responding to emergencies in a vast area covering 27 townships in Beltrami County and four townships in northern Hubbard County.



The NCFR received a \$1,500 ORU grant in October, enabling them to acquire backpack-style rapid response medical bags for their volunteers. These bags play a pivotal role in enhancing response times to remote locations, community events, confined spaces and situations where seconds can make a difference. Tara Hokuf, a member of the NCFR, expressed gratitude, stating, “The generous donation from Beltrami Electric’s Operation Round Up program this fall provided us the opportunity to purchase ‘rapid response bags’ for our members. These bags provide a distinct advantage in our response times.”

The NCFR emphasizes the ongoing need for community support to ensure they can continue to strengthen their membership and deliver crucial emergency care in the face of rising medical equipment and supply costs. Their mission of providing confident, competent and compassionate pre-hospital emergency care aligns with the ORU program’s broader goal of improving the quality of life in the region.



With the help of a \$2,500 ORU grant in 2017, the NCFR were able to purchase new life-saving AED units.

All contributions from ORU members directly benefit local community organizations, with an average monthly contribution of 50 cents or \$6 a year. The maximum yearly contribution is just \$11.88. Nonprofit organizations in the community are eligible to apply for ORU grants, and the Trust Board, consisting of five BEC members, convenes twice a year to review applications and allocate funds.

As BEC’s Operation Round Up program continues to thrive, its impact on our communities grows exponentially. For those who wish to contribute to positive change, reaching out to Beltrami Electric or visiting beltramielectric.com/operation-roundup is the first step toward making a meaningful difference in the local community. Together, the power of change is transforming lives and strengthening our communities.

CO-OP VALUES: THE ESSENTIALS - TODAY, TOMORROW AND ALWAYS

By Mike Birkeland, VP Electrification & Member Experience

An attitude of gratitude. It's a phrase we hear often, but a phrase that's oft forgotten. And it's a phrase worth remembering when it comes to the electric grid.

Amid the busyness and pace of everyday life, we don't think about the blessings and benefits of electricity. Thankfully, apart from severe storms, we typically don't have to worry if the lights will turn on when we flip the switch.

"The grid" is an amazing and complex network of power generation plants, overhead wires, underground cables, substations, poles, transformers, meters and other technology that allow us to safely keep our homes bright, comfortable and warm – especially when it gets cold outside.

"The grid" is made up of nearly 4,000 diverse private, not-for-profit, and public organizations that transmit electrons over power lines and employ people that power our communities, our business and industry, and our country.

SERVING THE COUNTRYSIDE

Electric cooperatives are a big part, and the not-for-profit part, of this picture. There are more than 900 distribution co-ops like Beltrami Electric across the United States. And every co-op is homegrown and locally owned.

We are governed by those we serve. And we serve resilient, pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstrap, communities. We provide electricity to areas where people and power poles are separated by vast tracts of timber, row-cropped fields, pastureland or one of our 10,000 walleye-filled lakes.



Beltrami Electric maintains 3,576 miles of line and averages 6.5 members per mile.

The expanse is a big reason we live here. The expense is THE reason that for-profit electric companies don't operate outside the confines of densely populated areas (i.e., the city limits). Electric co-ops typically serve rural areas where we grow more trees, soybeans and animals than people.

TIPPING THE CAP TO OUR PAST

Electric co-ops were organized by our forefathers and mothers. We're set up to operate "at cost." Any margin that is earned either goes back to our lenders to meet our loan obligations – or it goes back to members in the form of capital credits.

In other words – if you're a member of the co-op, you receive cash back through capital credits and your share of the margin over time. In the process, you're also making an investment in your local co-op. Your monthly payment for electric service supports building, operating and maintaining a safe and reliable electric distribution system for the communities and members we serve.

While capital credits grow and are paid back over time, co-op costs are spread over time and comprise the basis for electric rates. It's a business model that spans generations – because most of our equipment like poles, wires and transformers lasts for generations. Thus, the costs – and the benefits – are spread and shared across generations of members.

HOLDING THE LINE ON RATES

Thankfully, due to hard work, diligence and the wise use of member resources, Beltrami Electric hasn't had a rate increase in six years. It's especially notable given supply chain and inflationary challenges over the course of the past few years.

To do it while maintaining some of the best electric reliability and safety numbers in the state is even more of an accomplishment. That's news worth sharing – and acknowledging – today, tomorrow and always.

BUSINESS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

BLACKDUCK FLORAL & GIFT



Blooming with Passion and Purpose

This month, our business spotlight shines on the town of Blackduck, Minn., where a blossoming venture is capturing hearts and spreading joy. Meet Kayla Smischney, the vibrant entrepreneur behind the newly acquired Blackduck Floral & Gift, infusing the community with fresh perspectives and boundless creativity since November 2023.

After two decades of dedication to teaching, Kayla embarked on a new journey, embracing the opportunity to nurture her passion for floral design and customer service. With a vision to cultivate a haven where customers can

celebrate life's joys and find solace in difficult times, she took the helm of Blackduck Floral & Gift, infusing it with her unique flair and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Blackduck Floral & Gift is much more than a flower shop – it's a treasure trove of delightful surprises waiting to be discovered. From seasonal holiday decorations and charming gifts to locally crafted apparel, candles, dips, toys and tourist souvenirs, the shop offers an enchanting array of treasures to delight customers of all ages and interests.

As the seasons change, Blackduck Floral & Gift continues to evolve, offering new delights to enchant its patrons. With the arrival of spring, the shop's greenhouse comes alive

with a kaleidoscope of colors, offering a dazzling selection of annual hanging baskets and vibrant vegetable plants to inspire green thumbs and gardening enthusiasts alike.

To stay connected with the latest offerings and updates from Blackduck Floral & Gift, customers are encouraged to follow the shop's journey on Facebook, where Kayla shares glimpses of her latest creations and exciting developments. Additionally, eager patrons can explore the shop's official website, which is currently being developed, providing a convenient platform to explore its offerings and place orders from the comfort of home.



www.blackduckfloralandgift.com • 218-835-4477

Classifieds

Classified ads rules

- Ads are due by the first of the month prior to publication of the next issue.
 - Ads submitted by April 5 will be published in the May issue.
 - Ads submitted between April 6 and May 6 will be published in the June issue.
- Ads may be submitted via our website at www.beltramelectric.com/submit-ad (preferred).
- NO real estate, rental, personal or commercial ads will be accepted.
- All ads must be 50 words or less and typed or printed clearly.
- Editor reserves the right to edit or reject any ad.
- Members may only submit one for sale and one wanted or free ad per issue.
- Ads are published at no charge as space permits on a first-received, first-printed basis, **with no guarantee your ad will appear.**
- Ads are only allowed to be repeated for **three consecutive months** and must be resubmitted each month.
- Include name and Beltrami Electric account number on all submissions.

For Sale:

Rummage and bake sale at New Salem Lutheran Church at 7491 Island View Dr. NE, Turtle River. Saturday, April 20, from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Bargain sale at 1 p.m. All proceeds benefit local charities!

2018 Jayco Greyhawk Prestige Motorhome, 32' w/2 slides, like new, 7,000 miles, double fridge, 3 TVs, and many extras, below book, \$89,900. 970-901-2605.

16-foot Lund Niswaw series fiberglass boat and trailer. 40-hp Northwoods, steering console, and boat cover \$1,500. Leo 218-751-4929.

2017 Mirage 6'x10' enclosed trailer. Exc. condition \$3,400/obo. John Deere 19-inch garden tiller, has a newer 5 hp Honda motor. \$125/obo. Weatherby MarkV synthetic w/ stainless 300 Weatherby mag, 2x7 Burris scope, with ammo. \$1,400. 218-766-4210.

Cross-barred 16" tire chains for a light to medium truck. \$50. Self-propelled, cordless Makita lawn mower, only used for 30 minutes, 21" cut, \$500. 218-368-9320.

Mixture of firewood in lengths, you cut to your desired length. Approximately 15 cords. Very easy to access, near road. Located approximately 2 miles west of Tenstrike.

Great wood for an outdoor wood boiler. Asking \$550. 320-249-4647.

13-ft Scamp RV. AC, water heater, bathroom, larger bed, refrigerator, furnace. Some additional extras. \$12,000. 218-751-6240.

308 Marlin Express ammo. 22 rounds of Hornady Lever Evolution 160-gr FTX. These are not standard 308 rounds. \$40. 218-760-2252.

Stihl chainsaw, model 036-Pro. Good condition, \$100. HP 902 XL ink cartridges, unused, unopened. Two black XL cartridges. One XL set of color cartridges. One single black cartridge. \$8 each. Call 218-243-2472. Leave message with a number if no answer.

Older dehumidifier, works well. \$20. Peace Lily plant, \$20/obo. Beige comforter, twin size, great shape. 218-766-8781.

Three saddles. First is a youth saddle and blanket \$75 - second is a lady's saddle and matching bridle and blanket, black with silver trim \$150 - Third 15" brown saddle and blanket \$150. Please call 218-586-2839.

Pine, oak, and cedar rough cut and finished lumber. Bar top, fireplace mantels, shiplap and tongue and groove, specialty lumber and slab wood available. Call 218-766-7748 and ask for Don.

Chainsaw Husqvarna Rancher 55 with nearly new chain and used chain, enclosed case \$165. Adult trike, basket between rear wheels, \$350. Boat bookshelf 6'H x 2' W with four shelves \$250. 218-839-4641.

PLAYMOBIL vintage toys. Kayak, dog sled and dog team, seals, three figures, misc., set #3466. Western figures, set of four along with horse, dog, rocker, misc tools and weapons. \$50 for all. 218-766-1289.

Ashley recliner, like new condition, fabric is gray and easy to clean. Recline power buttons on side, requires electrical outlet. Purchased for \$1,300, asking \$500. 218-444-4327.

2021 Winnebago Micro Minnie travel trailer, 22-ft model 2108tb. King bed or two twin beds, one slide out, 100-watt solar package, TV, DVD, stereo, convection microwave, 15-ft awning, cold weather package and much more. Excellent condition, always shedded. Asking \$25,500/obo. 218-368-4088.

Golf pushcart, \$75. Electric golf pushcart, \$250. Children's golf clubs w/bag. Wilson 3 wood, \$75. Mizuno iron set, \$100. Top quality. 218-586-2534.

Books: paperbacks 25 cents, hardcover, 50 cents. Picture frames, all sizes, make offer. Electric appliances: frypan, wok, popcorn popper, ice cream maker, coffee maker, stand mixer, fillet knife, \$10 each. Quilted Queen

bedspread, beige with matching bolsters, \$25. Gold and brown full-size bedspread, from Mexico, \$15. 218-586-2884.

Lawn mower: Swisher Commercial Pro 66" deck, excellent condition: Reason for selling health and selling our home: very low hours. Allis Chalmers tractor: 180 tractor works well. Cobra: drain cleaning machine 3/8 x 75'. Excellent condition used once \$400. 100' Flat sewer rod: never used = new, \$50. 218-647-8196.

2020 Polaris Ranger Northstar Ultimate Crew. A/C, heat, ride command, full cab, plow optional, 58xx miles. \$26,000 firm. 218-368-2424.

2007 SeaRay 175 Sport w/2007 Shoreland'r trailer, 3.0 MerCruiser I/O. Very nice shape, seats are nice, comes with a Bimini top, snap-down mooring cover, tie-down transport cover, and stainless-steel prop. Reason for selling - we have a lot of grandkids so we bought a pontoon. Near Bemidji, reduced price: \$12,500. 218-242-0269.

2010 Chevy Traverse for sale: Only 30,550 miles on the new factory engine and many other updated repairs. All-wheel drive. Great tires. \$6,000. 218-760-2978.

Two ICE Sprint foldable, 36-speed, recumbent trikes. Fully functional, well maintained. Schlumpf mountain drives (gear inches: 8.3 to 107.9), disk brakes, rear suspension, luggage racks, panniers, front side bags, headrests, Schwalbe Marathon Plus tires, fenders, speedometers, maintenance records, instruction manuals, spare parts, tools for mountain drives. \$1,900/obo. 218-209-5423.

Whirlpool Ella's Bubbles Ultimate acrylic dual massage and foot massage walk-in tub. Originally \$6,556 selling for \$2,500/obo. 218-751-6210 or 218-209-5008.

25-inch long toy truck in original box. JB Wholesale and Midwest Pride on the side of the truck. Steel construction. Never used. Over 20 years old. 218-586-2617.

Yamaha P95, 88 key digital piano with stand and bench. Excellent condition used very little, \$400. Call or text 218-553-0272.

Wanted:

Retired teacher will care for your pets. Your house or mine. Call 218-766-6510.

Beavers destroying our trees. Need trapper south of Debs, call or text 218-209-1863.

Free:

Spider plants and bird's nest snake plants, available once it's warm and dry enough for outdoor potting. 218-224-3440.

NEED HELP PAYING YOUR ELECTRIC BILL?

Energy assistance may be available!

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) helps pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs for income-qualified households. We urge you to contact them immediately to avoid disconnection if you feel you are eligible for aid. (Eligibility is based on energy costs, household size and the most recent month of income.)



BI-CAP IN BEMIDJI
6603 Bemidji Ave N
Bemidji, MN 56601
218-751-4631

BI-CAP IN WALKER
8245 Industrial Park Rd NW
Walker, MN 56484
218-547-3438

KOOTASCA
201 4th Street NW, Suite 130
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
218-999-0824

LEECH LAKE
115 6th St
Cass Lake, MN 56633
218-335-3783

MAHUBE-OTWA
120 North Central Ave
Park Rapids, MN 56470
218-732-7204

RED LAKE
15809 High School Dr
Red Lake, MN 56671
218-679-3350



BELTRAMI ELECTRIC
Indoor Garage Sale

Saturday, May 4, 2024



Booth reservations for vendors will be open on **Wednesday, April 3, 2024**, and will be accepted until all booths have been filled. If interested, come into our office at 4111 Technology Dr. NW in Bemidji and sign up, or contact Cammie at **218-444-3675** or cvogel@beltramelectric.com.



SCAN ME

OR APPLY ONLINE

Visit energy-assistance.web.commerce.state.mn.us for EAP income guidelines and program information.

ASK THE EXPERT!



Item for sale by bid



1997 Ford Cargo Van, V8 Triton, 4.6L, 2WD, 126,727 miles.

Minimum bid: \$2,000.

Items are available for viewing at Beltrami Electric's office, 4111 Technology Dr NW, Bemidji, on the east side of the building, in front of BEC's garage area between April 8-10, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Bids will be accepted during this time as well.

BEC does not offer any written or implied warranties and reserves the right to reject any or all bids. Items sold "as-is." Cash only. Successful bidder is responsible for all taxes, license and transfer fees.

Item available April 8-10, 2024

CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE CHARGES ON MY BILL? (PART 2 OF 3)



Leslie Huot
Member Service Representative

Yes! Simply put, your bill is split into two parts: **FIXED COST** and **VARIABLE COST**. We shared details about the fixed cost in the March Northern Lights and will cover the variable cost this month.

The electricity you use is a **VARIABLE** cost and is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh). We all know that some months we use more electricity than others, especially when the temperatures are extremely hot or cold.

- o A **KILOWATT-HOUR (kWh)** is the measurement of electricity used. One kWh is equal to 1,000 watts used continuously for one hour. The higher the watt rating on electrical devices, the more electricity it uses.

The **PURCHASED POWER ADJUSTMENT** is a direct pass-through of changes in the average cost of wholesale power purchased from Minnkota Power Cooperative for both regular and off-peak rates. *(The adjusted cost could either be a decrease or an increase).* This allows BEC more flexibility when recouping fluctuations in the wholesale energy costs instead of estimating them into an overall electric rate. If you have additional questions contact our office at **218-444-2540** or email info@beltramielectric.com.

EXAMPLE:

A standard plug-in space heater uses 1,500 watts and runs for 8 hours a day for 30 days.

KWH USE = $\frac{1,500 \text{ watts} \times 8 \text{ hrs.} \times 30}{1000 \text{ watts}} = 360$

YOUR COST = $360 \text{ kWh} \times \$0.12 = \$43.20/\text{month}$

April is National Safe Digging Month



CAN YOU DIG IT?

Before you start planning any outdoor projects this spring, don't forget to **CALL BEFORE YOU DIG.**

Call 8-1-1 before you...

Put in a **MAILBOX**



Plant a **GARDEN**



Build a **DECK**



Add a **FENCE**



Ready to begin your next backyard addition? Visit call811.com or scan the code above to get started on your safe digging online request form today!

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EditorAngela Lyseng

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Monday – Friday

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Email: info@beltramielectric.com

MN STATE ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS

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.org for more information. Inspectors can be reached weekday mornings between 7 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

BELTRAMI COUNTY:

Wade Koons | 218-255-3011
wade@koonsinspections.com

CASS & HUBBARD COUNTIES:

Tony Kohrs | 218-616-1554
kohrsinspection@paulbunyan.net

GOPHER STATE ONE CALL

1-800-252-1166 or 811
www.gopherstateonecall.org



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 electric lines, municipal water and sewer lines can be located to ensure that none will be severed or damaged.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To provide excellent value to our members through the safe delivery of reliable electric service, excellent member service and innovative energy solutions at fair and reasonable prices.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Beltrami Electric Cooperative Inc.

® Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

*Connecting Communities.
Powering Life.*



PITCH IN

FOR OUR PARK



By Minnesota Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

**A VOLUNTEER EVENT
HOSTED BY
BELTRAMI ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE**

Join us at

**Lake Bemidji State Park
Thursday, May 16, 2024**

3:30 - 7:30 p.m.



**Picnic meal served for
volunteers at 5:30 p.m.**



**Volunteers can RSVP to
Angela at 218-556-0805 or
alyseng@beltramielectric.com**