



A challenging yet good year for your cooperative

by Jared Echternach, president and CEO

2025 was a challenging yet rewarding year for your cooperative, and I am so proud of our employees for what they accomplished. On June 21, nearly 90% of our members were without power as a derecho of major proportions ripped through our service area. We called on our employees and those from other cooperatives to answer the call ... and they did. It was through their tremendous and heroic efforts that we were able to restore power to all members within five days. We are used to the occasional storm, but this was atypical. State estimates indicated 9 million trees were lost in our area, not to mention the devastating damage to homes, businesses and institutions. I'd like to once again thank our employees for their work as well as our members for their outpouring of support and patience as we worked to restore power.

Storms aside, your cooperative continued to grow in 2025 with line crews constructing nearly 300 new services and performing more than 75 service improvements for our members. We finished the year financially sound with sufficient margins to meet all of our financial obligations and loan covenants. We completed the first year of our four-year construction work plan, including major projects along Roosevelt Road, Nature Road and a portion of Beltrami County Road 22. Most importantly, we completed all of this work safely.

Setting our course

Your board and employees undertook an intensive strategic planning process this fall and at its December meeting your board approved a new three-year strategic plan focused on four core areas:



We will focus on these core areas over the next three years as we continue to serve our members to the best of our ability.

Our vision and mission remain unchanged:

OUR VISION:

That the members of Beltrami Electric Cooperative realize the benefits of their membership as we strive to be their trusted energy partner.

OUR MISSION:

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.

2026 budget and rate outlook

Your board of directors will set the 2026 budget in January. The budget will include a rate change in April. Minnkota Power Cooperative is our wholesale power supplier and will increase rates by 4.1% in April. Wholesale power accounts for roughly 70% of our costs, so changes in wholesale rates have a significant impact on our operation. The remaining 30% of our costs are internal. Some of these are controllable, some are not. Your board of directors and employees have done an excellent job of keeping controllable costs within budget, yet prices continue to increase for material, equipment, insurance, labor and other items essential to operating your cooperative. Detailed information on the rate change will be included in next month's newsletter.

Congratulations, Dan Dudgeon

This month, we celebrate the retirement of staking technician Dan Dudgeon and thank him for 27 years of service to our cooperative. Dan began his career at BEC as a master electrician and quickly became a trusted resource for members and contractors, and later contributed as a staking technician on commercial projects and system expansions. His expertise and member-focused approach have left a lasting impact. We thank Dan for his years of service and wish him a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Congratulations, Mike Birkeland

This month, we mark the retirement of Vice President of Electrification and Member Experience Mike Birkeland as he concludes his service to Beltrami Electric on Jan. 9. Mike brought decades of leadership to our cooperative and played an important role in strengthening member service, community relationships and our strategic direction. I am grateful for his steady leadership and perspective, and I wish him a long, healthy and happy retirement filled with making music and sharing stories and time with family and friends.