

BENCO Electric Cooperative Link

JANUARY 2024

EMPLOYEES & DIRECTORS CELEBRATE YEARS OF SERVICE



Lisa & Todd Jacoby
Retiree - 32 Years



Scott Bohlke & Lisa Brewer
25 Years



Leonard & Marilyn Woelfel
25 Years



Shannon & Len Dohm
15 Years



Linda & Scott Johnson
15 Years



John & Peggy Wells
15 Years



Lisa & Bob Shubert
10 Years



Wade Groskreutz
10 Years



Nancy & Terry Genelin
5 Years

Not Pictured: Clay Hill (15 Years)

CEO CORNER

In December, our board of directors approved BENCO's Four-Year Construction Work Plan for 2024 – 2027. These work plans include a variety of upgrades and maintenance to ensure our electric system continues providing our membership with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. Four-year construction work plans are required by the Rural Utilities Service.

Over the next four years, work plan projects include a variety of items including new service line extensions, distribution line installations, conversions and line changes, new substations, substation changes, transformers and meters. Specifically, in 2024, we'll focus on the following:

- Complete the construction of the Rush River substation and then bury tie line between the New Sweden and Rush River substations.
- Rebuild three-phase overhead line along 520th St. and Timm Rd. in North Mankato.
- Install new line around the Northport business park with ties across US Hwy. 14.

- Rebuild the Century substation.
- Rebuild single-phase tie line to three-phase between Garden City and Sterling Center substations along County Rd. 13.
- Build new tie line between the Blue Earth legacy and Blue Earth SMEC substations.
- Rebuild the legacy Bricelyn south feeder and build a new feeder from Bricelyn legacy to serve the City of Bricelyn.

Outlining and implementing a detailed Four-Year Work Plan allows BENCO to continue providing safe and reliable electricity to our members.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Cooperatively yours,



FROM THE BOARD

November 16, 2023
Brad Leiding Presided

The board reviewed and approved the minutes of the October 26, 2023 board meeting.

CFC presented the 2022 Key Ratio Trend Analysis.

Abby reported on the RUS construction work plan.

Tim reported that AEDs will be placed in all BENCO vehicles.

Directors attending the Minnesota Ag & Food Summit by AgriGrowth reported.

The board approved to nominate Dave Sunderman to represent BENCO on the SMEC Board of Directors.

PCA UPDATE

ACTUAL PCA FOR
NOVEMBER

\$0.0285

ACTUAL PCA FOR
DECEMBER

\$0.0311

The Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) is due to changes in the monthly wholesale rate from our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE).



SAVE THE DATE

Save the date for BENCO's 2024 Annual Meeting! This year's annual meeting will take place on Saturday, April 6, 2024 at the Mayo Clinic Health Systems Event Center in Mankato. Stay tuned for more information in the coming months.

SAFETY FIRST: WEATHERING A WINTER STORM AND DOWNED POWER LINES

Winter months tend to bring winter storms and when ice and heavy snow send tree limbs and power lines to the ground, safety is of utmost concern.

ASSUME ALL POWER LINES ARE ENERGIZED

When outside, during or after a winter storm, always stay away from downed power lines. A power line does not need to be sparking or arcing to be energized. Also, lines that appear to be “dead” can become energized as crews work to restore power. Equipment near power lines can also be energized and dangerous. Always assume all power lines are energized. **If you see downed power lines, report them immediately by calling BENCO at 507-387-7963.**

AUTO ACCIDENTS

If you are in an auto accident involving a downed power line, inside your vehicle is usually the safest place to be, unless the vehicle is on fire. If it is safe, remain in your vehicle and call 911. BENCO personnel will arrive on-scene and de-energize the power. If you step out of the vehicle and the ground is energized, you are at risk for electrocution.

If the vehicle is on fire and you must evacuate, make a solid, clean jump from your vehicle and hop away with both feet together, and get as far away as possible.

As the driver of a vehicle, always avoid driving over downed power lines. Snagging a line could pull down a pole or other equipment and cause additional hazards.

STORM PREPARATION

Before the winter storm arrives, prepare your home and have supplies on hand. Always keep a battery-powered radio or TV, and a supply of flashlights, fresh batteries, drinking water, blankets, basic First Aid supplies, cell phone and chargers, baby supplies and non-perishable food items accessible.

When using alternate heating sources, such as a generator, always follow operating instructions, use fire safeguards and be sure to ventilate properly.

DON'T FORGET TO PREP YOUR CAR!

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit onboard. Kits should be checked twice a year and expired items should be replaced regularly. Emergency supply kits should include:



- Snowbrush
- Shovel
- Windshield washer fluid
- Cat litter for traction



- Warm clothing
- Blankets
- Drinking water
- Nonperishable foods



- Properly inflated spare tire
- Wheel wrench & tripod jack
- Jumper cables
- Fire extinguisher



- Reflective triangles
- Reflective vest
- Brightly colored cloth (to tie on side mirror)



- First-aid kit
- Flashlight and batteries
- Compass
- Car charger for cell phone

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- Medical alerts



WHERE, OH WHERE?

The following is a list of former BENCO members who have unclaimed capital credit checks or credit balances on their inactive account. Please contact Angie at 507-387-7963 with any information on locating the former BENCO members. A full list of members with unclaimed balances can be found at BENCO.org/capital-credits.

M

Robert Morris, Ellis, KS
Steven W. Morris, Volin, SD
Darrell R. Morrison, Blaine
Geo Morrison, Mankato
Kathy M. Morrison, Waterloo, IA
Arvellis Morrow, Good Thunder
Richard S. Morrow, Madison Lake
Robert C. Morrow, Mapleton

Jeff Morse, Lake Crystal
Betty Morson, Lake Crystal
Dwayne Mortenson, Granada
Jeffrey Mortenson, Winnebago
Matt Mortenson, Granada
Zach Mortenson, Winnebago
David P. Mosel, Lafayette
Adam M. Mosenden, Hanska
Tanner Moser, Gillette, WY
John B. Mosher, St. Peter
Rob A. Moszer, North Mankato
Arashk Motiei, Roseville
George Motto, St. Peter
Gary Motzko, Eagle Lake
Sheng Moua, Mankato
Calvin Moultrie, Mankato
Jari Mowers, Johnston, IA
Mr. Allan's Hair Care, Mesa, AZ
Addy Mueller, North Mankato
Beverly Mueller, Mankato
Elicia P. Mueller, Mankato

Gary W. Mueller, Elysian
Jared M. Mueller, Janesville
Joyce Mueller, Madison Lake
Bill Muellereile, Sanford, NC
Michelle M. Muellerleile, North Mankato
Michelle M. Muellerleile, Mankato
Marc W. Muench, North Mankato
Mike Muenchrath, Mankato
Ricardo T. Muggli, Mankato
Levi P. Mulcahey, Mankato
Eric Mulder, North Mankato
Douglas R. Mulenburg, Darwin
Kerry A. Mulenburg, Mankato
Kristi R. Mulenburg, Mankato
Michael Mulenburg, Mankato
Erin A. Mullaly, Winnebago
Connie Mullenberg, Mankato
Ferris Muller, Bloomington
Tamara Mulligan, Mankato
Helen Mullins, Port Washington, WI
Joyce M. Mundahl, Mankato

CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS!

Each year BENCO Electric Cooperative partners with the National Rural Electrical Cooperative Association (NRECA) and Minnesota Rural Electrical Association (MREA) to award an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, DC for one high school sophomore or junior whose parents are BENCO members.



BENCO's Washington, DC Youth Tour delegate will embark on a jam-packed schedule, June 18 - 23, 2024, including visits to the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Smithsonian National Museum, Mount Vernon and the FBI Headquarters. They may also take in a show at the Kennedy Center, dinner at the Hard Rock Cafe and spend a day on Capitol Hill, meeting Minnesota's Senators and Representatives.

BENCO's 2022 Washington DC Youth Tour Delegate says, "This was a phenomenal experience and has made me want to focus on pursuing a career in law. Washington, DC is an important city and inspired me to be one of the change-makers."

This is a great opportunity for anyone with an interest in our nation's government and your local electric cooperative.

To apply, submit a one-page, typed essay titled "Why I want to go to Washington, DC". Please include the student's name, parent's name, email address, name of high school and a list of activities the student is involved in.

Please mail your entry to: BENCO Electric Cooperative, Attn: Chelsea, PO BOX 8, Mankato, MN 56002. Entries must be received no later than Monday, February 12, 2024.





Touchstone Energy*

P.O. Box 8
Mankato, MN 56002-0008

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what's cooking?

Receive a \$20 credit on your electric bill if your recipe appears in the newsletter.



SAUERKRAUT SOUP

From the Kitchen of: Darlene Fretham

Ingredients:

- 4.5 cups water
- 4 med. potatoes cubed
- 1/2 cup onion
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 lb. smoked sausage, cut up
- 1 16 oz. can sauerkraut
- 1 tsp. dill seed
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 Tbsp. flour

Directions:

Cook potatoes, onion and salt in the water until potatoes are tender. Add sausage, undrained sauerkraut and dill seed and bring to boil. Combine sour cream and flour and gradually stir into one cup of hot liquid. Return to soup and heat - do not boil.



This newsletter is published monthly by BENCO Electric Cooperative.

Office Hours: Mon -Fri - 7:30 am - 4:00 pm
Phone: 387-7963 or 1-888-792-3626

Outages/After Hours:
387-7964 or 1-888-792-3626

Chelsea Germo - Editor

Board Meetings:

Board meetings are held the last Thursday of each month. Members are welcome to contact directors with items of interest in advance of the meeting or if they wish to attend. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Board of Directors:

Brad Leiding - President - District 3
Marilyn Lynch - Vice President - District 5
Scott Johnson - Secretary - District 9
Terry Genelin - Treasurer - District 1
Don Westphal - District 2
John Wells - District 4 - MREA Director
Blake Meshke - District 6
Gary Stenzel - District 7 - GRE Director
Duane Ehrich - District 8

ENTER TO WIN. SEND YOUR FAVORITE RECIPE TO:

BENCO Electric Cooperative, Attn: Chelsea, PO Box 8, Mankato, MN 56002