

# CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS

## 2011 annual meeting and election



### Annual Meeting

Thursday, April 7 | St. Michael's Social Hall

- Registration and informal opportunity to speak with candidates from 6:30 - 7 p.m.
- Business meeting begins at 7 p.m.
- St. Michael's Social Hall, 22120 Denmark Ave., Farmington, MN 55024

### Voting

Survey & Ballot Systems, an independent firm, oversees the voting process and will mail a ballot to every Dakota Electric member household on March 22. Members can vote by mail or online at [www.dakotaelectric.com](http://www.dakotaelectric.com). To vote online, members will need their account number and the e-signature, both of which will be included with the mailed ballot on March 22.

### Candidates

Detailed biographies are available at [www.dakotaelectric.com](http://www.dakotaelectric.com) for the candidates on the ballot.

#### District 1

Ron Swagger (*incumbent*)  
Ruthe Batulis  
David Jones

#### District 2

Janet Lekson (*incumbent*)  
Jerry Hansen  
Timothy Keegan

#### District 3

Margaret Schreiner (*incumbent*)  
Raymond Yarwood

#### District 4

Buzz Anderson      David Leckey  
Paul Bakken          Leo Nicolai  
Jerry Brown          Joan Volz  
William Frandrup      Victor Yermishkin

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**\$3 OFF** with a coupon included in bills mailed Feb. 10-March 3.

**\$2 OFF** instant savings at select Walmart stores

Save on GE Energy Smart® CFLs from March 1-July 31, 2011  
Dakota Electric reserves the right to discontinue this promotion at any time.

ANOTHER BRIGHT IDEA FROM  
Dakota Electric Association

Due to the presence of mercury, CFLs must be recycled. In Minnesota, it is illegal to place them directly in the garbage.

**Participating Wal-Mart stores:**

- Apple Valley
- Eagan
- Hastings
- Inver Grove Heights
- Red Wing

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### Upcoming events

- 5th Annual Crops Day . . . March 8, 9:00 a.m.
- Board meeting . . . . . March 31, 8:30 a.m.

Program information and offers in this newsletter  
are subject to change without notice.

March 2011



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



## Understanding electric utility service

Most members use electricity every day without giving much thought to how this service is provided by Dakota Electric Association and thousands of other electric utilities across the nation. The diagram to the right illustrates the process of delivering electricity to your home or business. The following is a brief overview of this process and the costs associated with it.

### GENERATION

The generation function consists of power plants, fuel and labor to operate these plants. Generation facilities are the first link in the chain in providing electricity to consumers.

### TRANSMISSION

The transmission function moves electricity from power plants over long distances to local service areas, such as your town or neighborhood. This function consists of costs for high voltage lines and labor to operate and maintain these facilities. Transmission lines typically consist of large steel or wood structures and wires.

### DISTRIBUTION

Dakota Electric provides all of the services that make up the distribution function to its member-consumers. Distribution is the final link in the chain built to deliver electricity to your home or business. Dakota Electric's distribution plant includes substations, poles, wires, transformers and meters. These facilities are required to convert and deliver high voltage power from the transmission system into voltage that is usable for homes and businesses. Service and labor expenses incurred by Dakota Electric include the operation and maintenance of facilities, as well as billing and member services.

Creating and delivering electricity is accomplished through three general functions: generation, transmission and distribution.

Dakota Electric purchases generation and transmission services from Great River Energy and provides distribution services directly to our members.

## Is it time for an upgrade?

Some of the largest users of energy in your home are appliances you use everyday. Upgrade to a more efficient model with the help of rebates from Dakota Electric, and you will save energy and money every month.

### Refrigerator

\$75 rebate for ENERGY STAR® rated refrigerator (requires recycling of replaced unit)

### Freezer

\$75 rebate for ENERGY STAR® rated freezer (requires recycling of replaced unit)

Visit [www.dakotaelectric.com](http://www.dakotaelectric.com) and click on the Residential tab to find out more about the rebates and programs we offer.

*Limited funds are available, and rebates are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Rebates subject to change without notice.*



## Contact Us

Member service & drive-up window  
7 a.m. – 7 p.m. Monday - Friday  
651-463-6212 or 1-800-874-3409  
Hearing Impaired TDD 651-463-6144

Lobby 7 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday  
4300 220th Street West, Farmington, MN 55024

24-hour outage & emergency service  
651-463-6201 or 1-800-430-9722

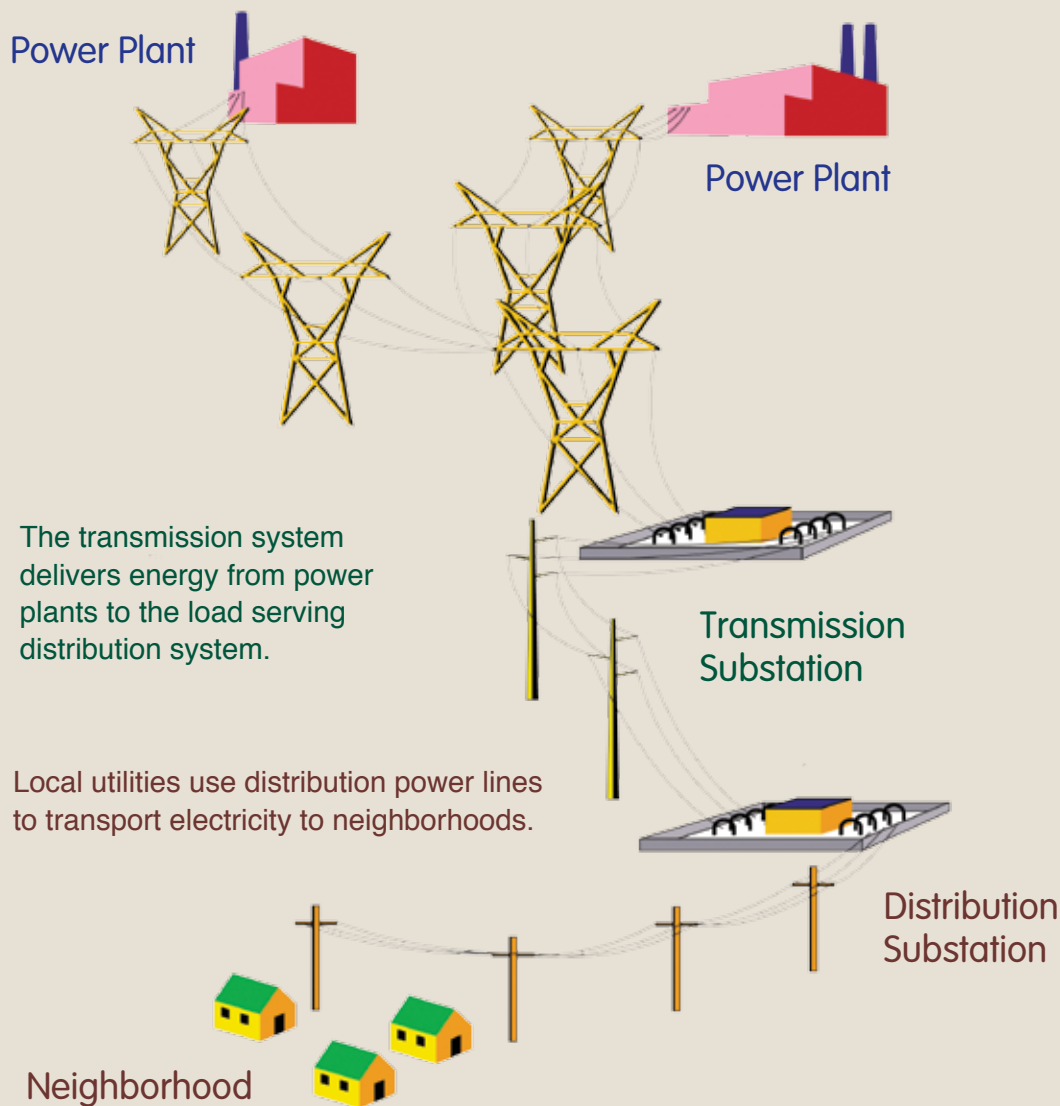
Underground cable locations Gopher State  
One Call 811 or 651-454-0002 or 1-800-252-1166

Tree trimming & street lights 651-463-6287

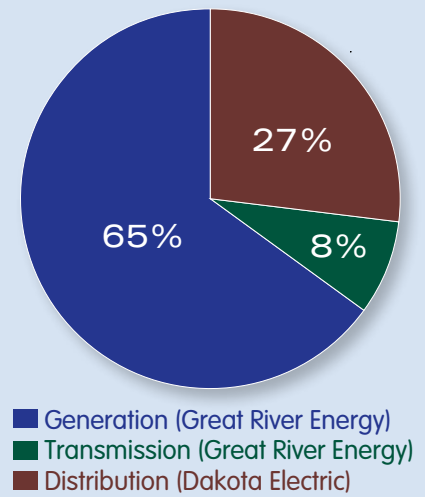
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[info@dakotaelectric.com](mailto:info@dakotaelectric.com)

# How the system works



## COST OF SERVICE



These percentages are calculated by dividing the cost of each function by the total cost of providing service to our members.

If you have any questions regarding electric utility service and the costs associated with each of the functions, please contact Dakota Electric at 651-463-6212.

## Minnesota Legislature considers changes to energy legislation

The Minnesota Legislature is in full swing in St. Paul. During this legislative session two specific energy issues are at the forefront – coal-based energy and nuclear power.

### Coal-based energy

A bill has been introduced that would repeal the restrictions on using energy from new coal generation, which was part of the Next Generation Energy Act of 2007 (NextGen Act of 2007). This has a direct impact on Dakota Electric Association's wholesale energy provider – Great River Energy. Spiritwood Station, Great River Energy's newest

coal-based power plant (scheduled to come online in 2012) is located in North Dakota.

Proponents of the bill indicate that they are seeking the repeal to keep more energy options open. Great River Energy also says that the current law is ambiguous and confusing. Opponents, on the other hand, have said that the bill would pull the state back from its clean energy path. At time of publication, the bill (HF 72) passed the House Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Committee and was sent on to the House Commerce and Regulatory

Reform Committee.

### Nuclear power plants

On Feb. 2 the Minnesota Senate voted to lift the moratorium on new nuclear power plants in Minnesota. SF 4 received overwhelming bipartisan support. The final vote was 50-14. Proponents indicate that removing the ban provides the opportunity to start the discussion on nuclear energy. Opponents assert that Minnesota utilities do not need new baseload energy in the foreseeable future.



## Are you ready to **build a new home?**

### Don't do it without the ENERGY STAR® New Home Construction Program

Since 1995, 1 million families nationwide have moved into ENERGY STAR® qualified homes, saving \$1.2 billion on energy bills and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 22 billion pounds.

The Energy Star® New Home Construction Program is based on the concept of a house as a system and rewards you for building a home with energy-efficient design and construction. Dakota Electric provides free consultation services and rebates to members who build a qualified home.

We are available to consult with you from the planning stage to the final home inspection. Contact an Energy Expert® at 651-463-6243 for more information or visit [www.dakotaelectric.com](http://www.dakotaelectric.com).

## Get inspired

Home parades are an excellent opportunity to learn more about the latest in energy-efficiency for the home. During the event below, local builders will showcase energy-efficient homes, including ENERGY STAR® certified homes.

### Parade of Homes Spring Preview<sup>SM</sup>

- March 5 - April 3
- Details at [www.paradeofhomes.org](http://www.paradeofhomes.org)
- Visit [www.dakotaelectric.com](http://www.dakotaelectric.com) for a list of homes with Dakota Electric's energy-saving programs.

## EnergyWise® reduces wholesale power bill by more than \$15 million

Dakota Electric would like to thank our business and residential members who participate in EnergyWise® off-peak programs. In 2010, you helped reduce our wholesale power bill by \$15.6 million, which is more than a 10-percent reduction in our payment to Great River Energy, our wholesale power supplier, compared to not having the programs. Learn more about EnergyWise programs at [www.dakotaelectric.com](http://www.dakotaelectric.com).

### EnergyWise Benefits

- Bill credits or lower-priced electricity
- Easy to participate
- Programs offered to residential, agricultural and business members



## CapX2020 seeks to assure reliable electricity to Minnesotans

As part of its plan to provide reliable electric service in the future to electric cooperative members in Minnesota, Great River Energy is participating with 10 other utilities in building new transmission lines around the state. Two lines that will be routed through Dakota Electric's service territory are the Brookings, S.D. to Hampton line and the Hampton to Rochester to La Crosse, Wis. line. Besides these lines, three other major lines are in process in northern and central Minnesota.

### Brookings to Hampton

The extensive Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) approval process for the Brookings to Hampton line has been completed. Numerous public hearings were held to determine the route

and the environmental impact of the line. By mid-2011, utility personnel will begin contacting landowners along the route of the line to secure easements. Construction is scheduled to begin in western Minnesota in 2012 and in Dakota County in 2013.

### Hampton to La Crosse

The Hampton to La Crosse line is currently going through the environmental impact statement process. Public meetings will possibly be held in April. Announcements will be mailed to landowners along the route and notices will be printed in local papers. The MPUC decision on the environmental impact statement may not be announced until late 2011 or early 2012.

For more information, members may visit [www.capx2020.com](http://www.capx2020.com).

# River Country Cooperative sees the light...and the savings

Most people take for granted the convenience of driving under a gas station canopy. While we fill up our gas tanks the canopy protects us from rain or snow, and the lights allow us to fill up at night or during the early morning hours without hesitation.

An innovative new compact fluorescent lighting (CFL) retrofit at River Country Cooperative's Marathon® station in Apple Valley has made its canopy more energy efficient, cost-effective and the first of its kind.

The new patent-pending lighting technology was developed by Sherry Yager, founder and president of Sher Lighting. While working in the service department for several years at Medina Electric in Hamel, Minn., she invented a Retrofit Assembly Kit that enables customers to convert existing lighting fixtures into more energy-efficient systems using CFLs or induction lighting without having to throw away perfectly good fixtures.

"These kits come ready-to-install and are very environmentally friendly," Yager said. "By using an existing fixture, the only thing we [remove] and recycle is the lamp in most fixtures."

The energy savings are impressive as well. The retrofit assembly kit can produce equivalent light or more while at the same time lowering the wattage consumption by 50-75 percent, thus reducing a company's monthly electric bill and future maintenance costs.



Sherry Yager, president of Sher Lighting, seen here with Caleb Albrecht, daytime manager at the Marathon Convenience Store in Apple Valley.

"All of our kits are custom made to meet the needs of the consumer," Yager said. "They are made from high quality products and are all UL listed."

Mark Kortkamp, business account executive at Dakota Electric, introduced the idea to River Country Cooperative of St. Paul, the owner of the Marathon station.

"We constantly search for reliable, cost-effective ways to help our commercial and industrial members increase efficiency," said Kortkamp. "Yager's retrofit kit is a fresh approach. It's simple, fits existing fixtures, reduces [installation] material and labor cost, and uses 50-percent less energy."

That benefits Dakota Electric, its members and the environment. According to Kortkamp, the retrofit kits are meeting their expectations.

Sher Lighting has done several retrofit projects with various commercial and industrial companies, including gyms, garages, apartment complexes, manufacturing plants, business offices and more.

The secret to Yager's success is a mirrored reflector in the kit that allows you to get all of the generated light out of the fixture. So

even though the CFL lamp is using half the watts, the output is still the same or better.

"My happiest moments are when customers call and tell me how much they've lowered their electric bill," Yager said.

With help from Dakota Electric's rebate program, River Country Cooperative was able to save more than 25 percent on the project cost at the Marathon station. They will see an annual energy savings of more than \$2,200.

"We like the light output," said Tom Boland, River Country Cooperative. "The installation was relatively hassle-free, even in a cold Minnesota winter, and it is nice to have a project that will pay for itself inside of two and a half years."

Kortkamp has worked with River Country Cooperative on other energy-efficient upgrades at the Marathon store, including LED lights in the coolers and an energy management system that can track and report energy consumption.

"With some energy claims, you kind of wonder about the claim of energy savings versus the result," said Boland. "With this project we can monitor it with the energy management system and see the savings."



An electrician from Medina Electric prepares to install the CFL assembly kit into the existing fixtures on the canopy at Marathon Convenience Store in Apple Valley.



A closer look at the mirrored reflector that can double or triple the lumen output of a lamp.

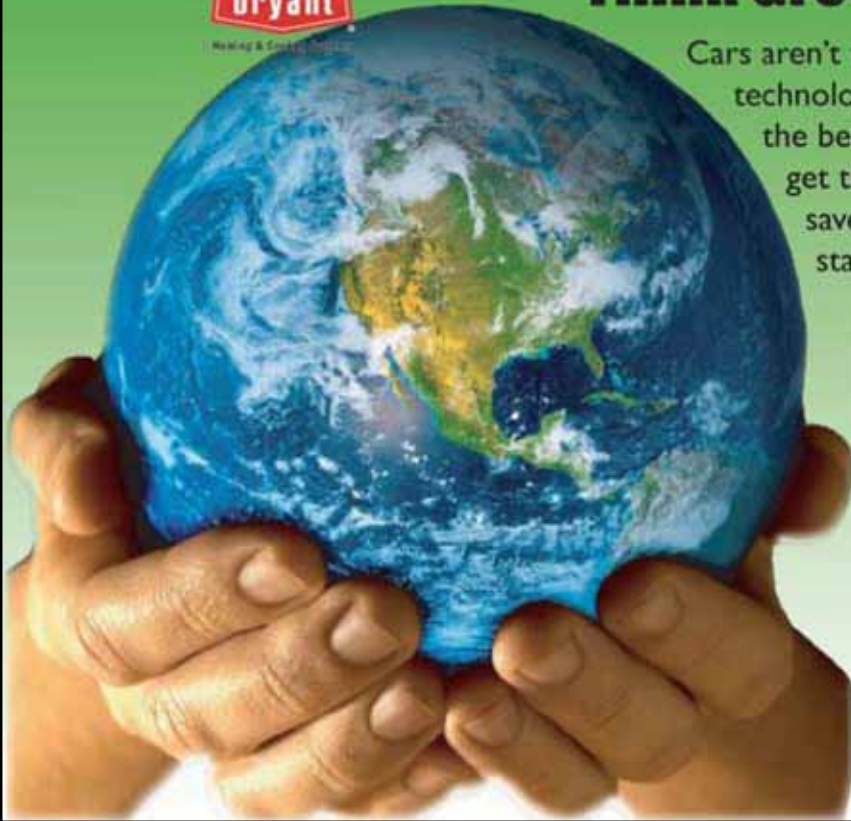
Whatever it takes.

**bryant**

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# Circuits Quick Clips

## Learn how to lower energy use

Apple Valley's be. (better energy) program is designed to help Apple Valley homeowners reduce energy use and save money at the same time.

The be. program includes free educational workshops to teach Apple Valley homeowners how to lower their energy use.

All workshops are held at the Hayes Community and Senior Center.



### Upcoming workshops

Tuesday, March 15 at 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 14 at 6:30 p.m.

For more information, visit <http://www.ci.apple-valley.mn.us/>.

## Helping Neighbors®

Dakota Electric created the Helping Neighbors® trust to help struggling families and individuals catch up on utility bills during unexpected hardships.

### Who gets the donations?

- 360 Communities
- CAP Agency
- Salvation Army



### Sending a donation

Option 1 – small, monthly donations added to your electric bill.

Option 2 – one-time contribution

To learn more, contact our member services department at 651-463-6212 or [customerservice@dakotaelectric.com](mailto:customerservice@dakotaelectric.com).

## Join us at the 5th annual Crops Day: Take Charge!

Tuesday, March 8

9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at Dakota Electric Association

### Learn the latest updates from local experts.

FREE event, but pre-registration is requested. Call Phyllis Bongard at (651) 480-7757 by March 3. For more information, visit [www.dakotaelectric.com](http://www.dakotaelectric.com).

*Sponsored by Dakota Electric Association, Southeast Irrigators Association, Kimmes-Bauer Well Drilling, University of Minnesota Extension and Dakota County Water Resources Department.*

## Spring into savings

Spring is just around the corner, and it is the perfect time of year to make your home more energy efficient. Here are five quick tips that will save both energy and money.

### Seal the cracks and gaps around your home

Spring may be the right time to put away those storm windows, but it is also a good time to add weather-stripping and caulking around leaky window panes.

### Change filters regularly

Dirty filters can restrict air flow and reduce the overall efficiency of your cooling system, making it work even harder on hot summer days.

### Clean the refrigerator inside and out

Ideally, a refrigerator's temperature should be between 37 and 40 degrees for maximum operating efficiency.

### Think sun block

By pulling the shades on your windows this spring and summer, you could save about \$35 a year.

### Enjoy the spring breezes

Use a clothesline throughout the warmer months to let the sun and breeze dry clothes naturally. This will reduce your energy bill.

To learn about additional ways to cut your energy bill this spring, visit [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com), or contact a Dakota Electric Energy Expert® at 651-463-6243.



## Board of Directors

### District 1

Gerald F. Pittman  
Carl E. Potter, Great River Energy  
Director  
Ronald R. Swagger

### District 2

Clay Van De Bogart, Great River  
Energy Director  
Janet L. Lekson  
Jim Sheldon, Chair

### District 3

Kenneth H. Danner, Treasurer  
William F. Holton, Vice Chair  
Margaret D. Schreiner

### District 4

Ray B. Nicolai  
Judy H. Kimmes, MREA Director  
Paul A. Trapp, Secretary



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Greg Miller, President & CEO  
Tanya Wolfs, Editor



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# Join us at the 2011 ANNUAL MEETING

Being a member-owner of Dakota Electric means you have a say in the operation of your cooperative. One of the best ways to become involved is by voting for the board of directors and attending the annual meeting.



**Thursday, April 7 | St. Michael's Social Hall | Farmington**

*Check the front page for more details.*