

CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS

Members save big by switching to LEDs

"It all started about 10 years ago," began Shirley Esch of Burnsville. "I had an aunt and uncle in Illinois who set out luminaries on one night in Dec., then dressed up as Santa and Mrs. Claus and handed out candy canes to local kids. I thought we could do the same thing here, only use it as a way to collect donations for the food shelf."

Ten years and several awards later, visiting the Christmas display at the Esch home has become a holiday tradition for many families. "This will be our 11th year," said Michael Esch. "Many

families even take the annual Christmas photo of their children here, sitting on Santa's and Mrs. Claus' laps."

The Esch's display finally grew so large that a few years ago their electric bill for the two-month display was \$460. "I had put in a 90 amp circuit outside the house to accommodate the display," laughed Michael. "But now it could probably run on one extension cord."

\$460 bill now \$180!

"It started with the large maple tree in front," said Michael, "which was wrapped with 40 strands of mini lights. We replaced them with LEDs (light emitting diodes) one year and saw an immediate reduction in our electric bill."

"As other lights have worn out since then, we've replaced them with LEDs," finished Shirley. After switching most of the lights to LEDs, the Esch's electric bill for the two-month display was \$180, a savings of \$280 over just a few years

(Continued on page 2)



Santa and Mrs. Claus greet the children at Holiday in Lights on Aspen Drive.

save \$3

on ENERGY STAR® qualified GE brand LEDs. Coupon(s) on page 8 and in bills mailed Oct. 14 - Nov. 11, 2010.

Offer good from November 1 - December 24, 2010

save \$2

instantly on qualified ENERGY STAR® LED holiday string sets at participating Target stores.

Offer good from November 15 - November 29, 2010 or while supplies last.

save \$3

on ENERGY STAR® LED holiday string sets with a mail-in rebate available at www.dakotaelectric.com.

Offer good through December 31, 2010

Promotions and rebates cannot be combined. Visit www.dakotaelectric.com for complete details.

Enter online for your chance to win a \$500 gift card.



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ANOTHER BRIGHT IDEA FROM

Dakota Electric

In This Issue

- Save money on CFLs and LEDs2
- Small business and ag rebates3
- Cedar Ave. construction project4
- Energy efficiency4-5
- Conservation goal results7

Upcoming events

- Holiday Boutique.....Nov. 6, 9 a.m.
- Board meeting..... Nov. 18, 8:30 a.m.

November 2010



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Members save on LEDs (cont.)

ago! "I figure the lights pay for themselves in a couple of years," said Michael.

Event benefits hungry

True to the inspired roots of the display, the Esches use the event to collect donations for the local food shelf. "But 360 Communities tells us that they can buy \$6 of food for every \$1 donated, so we encourage visitors to donate money if possible."

You can save too

LED light strings use up to 90 percent less energy than traditional holiday lights and last up to 10 times longer. They are cool to the touch and not sensitive to extreme changes in temperature.

Switch some of your holiday lights to LEDs and you can save on your electric bill, too. Not only that, but you can also

receive a discount or rebate from Dakota Electric on your purchase. See details on page one of this newsletter or call 651-463-6212 or visit www.dakotaelectric.com.

A gift of love

"It gets pretty busy here but the neighbors all help out," laughed Shirley. "One year someone put a *For Sale by Neighbors* sign in our yard as a joke!"

"Kids will be lined up at the corner by 4:45 and we even get tour buses now," said Michael. "It's a lot of work, but we love it. This is our gift to the community."

You're invited

Santa, Mrs. Claus and the elves will greet children of all ages on Sun., Dec. 12, from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Esch home, 1120 Aspen Drive, Burnsville. Please bring a donation for the food shelf.



Holiday in Lights on Aspen Drive will be held this year on Sun., Dec. 12, 5 to 8 p.m.
1120 Aspen Dr., Burnsville, Minn.



Compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) contain a small amount of mercury and must be recycled. Mercury is harmful to the environment, and placing CFLs in the garbage is illegal in Minnesota. To learn how to lawfully dispose of CFLs, visit www.earth911.org or call the MN Pollution Control Agency at 651-296-6300.



Hurry! Offer expires Nov. 30.

Special pricing for a limited time

Limit 12 bulbs per customer.

savings with a twist



To purchase your CFLs*

1. Call 1-888-476-9548 to find a participating retailer near you.
2. Ask a store representative which bulbs qualify for the ENERGY STAR® instant rebate.
3. Select up to 12 qualifying compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs).
4. Bring your CFLs to the check out counter.
5. Complete the ENERGY STAR® instant rebate coupon.

*Quantities are limited. Selection and price will vary by store.

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

Careers 651-463-6129
Dakota Electric is an equal opportunity/
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www.dakotaelectric.com
info@dakotaelectric.com

Your small business is our business

Expenses add up quickly when operating a small business. And since your business is an important part of our business, we want to work with you to find energy- and money-saving solutions that help your business thrive.

Through personalized service and tailored programs, we will help you get more for the money you spend on energy. Dakota Electric offers many programs to lower electricity expenses, including low off-peak rates and

rebates and grants toward the purchase of energy-efficient equipment.



Call the Energy Experts® today at 651-463-6243 to see how your business can be more efficient. Or visit us online at www.dakotaelectric.com.

Rebates for ag members

Farms are an important part of Dakota Electric's proud history, and we know that your farm is your business. That is why we offer money-saving incentives and rebates for agricultural members. Call 651-463-6243 for information on agricultural rebates, including:

- Milking vacuum pump ASD
- Milk transfer pump ASD
- Scroll compressors for bulk tanks
- Waste heat exchangers
- Frame type milk pre-coolers
- Well water pre-cooler
- Energy-efficient lighting
- NEMA premium efficient motors
- Microzone control systems



Contact the EnergyExperts® at 651-463-6243 for ideas on how your farm or business can save energy and money.



The City of Burnsville received a \$6,000 EnergyGrant® from Dakota Electric to replace less-efficient holiday decorative lighting with new LED (light emitting diode) lights.

City of Burnsville shines with LEDs

When the City of Burnsville flips on their Heart of the City Winter Lighting display, some 370 trees and 200 snowflake-adorned lamp posts will come alive with energy-efficient LED lights. And for the first time in its 11-year history, the lighting display will reuse the lights from last year.

"The incandescent light strings were cut off the trees and snowflakes each year," said David Grommesch, community landscape supervisor. "So many would burn out each year it was cheaper to replace them. I wanted to save money in the city's budget."

Ed Delmoro, vice president of the Burnsville Community Foundation and city volunteer, agreed. Both Grommesch and Delmoro were bothered by the waste. LEDs provided a solution.

LEDs save money "LEDs are more expensive to buy, but they can be reused each year and they save on energy costs," said Delmoro. LEDs use up to 90 percent less energy than incandescents and last up to 10 times longer.

Dakota Electric helps Burnsville's upgrade to LEDs was funded in part by a \$6,000 EnergyGrant® from Dakota Electric, while the Community Foundation paid for the rest. "The new LEDs save Burnsville 101,000 kWh each season, enough electricity to operate 10 homes for one year," said Tim Doherty, business accounts executive for Dakota Electric.

"We didn't have one LED burn out last year," said Delmoro. "And they look absolutely beautiful."

BUSINESS REBATES & INCENTIVES

Visit www.dakotaelectric.com or call an Energy Expert® at 651-463-6243 to find out if Dakota Electric has rebates or incentives available for your organization or business.

Cedar Avenue construction gets started

Minnesota – the land of 10,000 lakes and two seasons: winter and road construction. Right? And as we head into winter, there is still another chapter to be written before the white stuff falls.

People who drive Cedar Avenue between 181st Street in Lakeville and 138th Street in Apple Valley have undoubtedly noticed that road construction season has not ended. According to Dakota

County's website, the Cedar Avenue project will widen the road to allow for bus-only shoulder lanes and other roadway improvements.

Utilities to be moved

As with many road construction projects, utilities in the right-of-way need to be relocated. Dakota Electric's role in this project, and all road construction projects, is to eliminate conflicts between the work and Dakota Electric's lines and equipment.

"This project is not a large project by Dakota Electric standards," notes Sue Pariseau, land-use project manager at Dakota Electric. "We are involved in 10 to 15 road projects a year, many this size or larger. This is a typical project for us."

John Ginther, Dakota Electric's utility operations superintendent, estimated that Dakota Electric staff will devote about 1,500 hours of labor to accomplish the required work, including converting some electric lines from overhead to underground. "We share the same trench with the cable and telephone companies and work with them to install a joint trench. This saves money for our members."

Members affected

Co-op members are always notified by mail if their property is affected by scheduled Dakota Electric work. Staff plans and coordinates construction work so affected businesses and homes continue to receive reliable power throughout the project.

Residents interested in more information on the Cedar Avenue project can visit Dakota County's website at www.co.dakota.mn.us.



Shop for the ENERGY STAR® this season

If your holiday shopping list includes home electronics, be sure to shop for the ENERGY STAR.® ENERGY STAR qualified products deliver superior features and meet energy-efficiency standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

According to energystar.gov:

- More than six billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions could be eliminated this year if every TV, DVD and home theater system purchased in the U.S. was ENERGY STAR qualified.

- Some of the largest televisions can use up to 500 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity every year, as much as a new refrigerator. Televisions that have earned the ENERGY STAR use approximately 40 percent less electricity than standard models.
- If all computers sold in the U.S. were ENERGY STAR models, we could save \$1.5 billion and reduce greenhouse emissions equivalent to two million vehicles.
- Visit www.energystar.gov for more information.

Test drive ChargeWise®

Dakota Electric is making the transition from the gas pump to the plug-in easier for our members. This pilot program offers the first 50 participants \$500 toward a ChargeWise® outlet and low-cost, off-peak electricity for charging a plug-in hybrid vehicle (PHEV). ChargeWise outlets will charge PHEV batteries between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when the demand for electricity is low, the price for wholesale power is at its lowest and wind energy is available. Contact the Energy Experts® at 651-463-6243 for more information.



Charting a course to energy efficiency

As energy prices rise, consumers are becoming more educated about their energy use. Use the conservation pyramid to develop a plan. Begin at the base, and as you move up the pyramid you will gradually develop a home that operates at its highest efficiency.

Understanding

Do your research. Look at last year's energy bills and identify when energy use is particularly high. Use an energy monitor from your library to measure the electricity used by each of your devices.

Low cost/no cost

These are the easiest changes, but can make a big difference on your energy bills; they include such simple actions as turning down the thermostat in the winter, keeping doors shut, turning unused lights off and shutting off the faucet when you are not using it.

Lighting

Rid your home of standard incandescent bulbs. Choose CFLs, LEDs or other energy-efficient lighting options.

Air sealing

Seal drafts with weather stripping, caulking or window film to keep the outside air out. Use foil tape (not duct tape) to seal your duct work.

Appliances

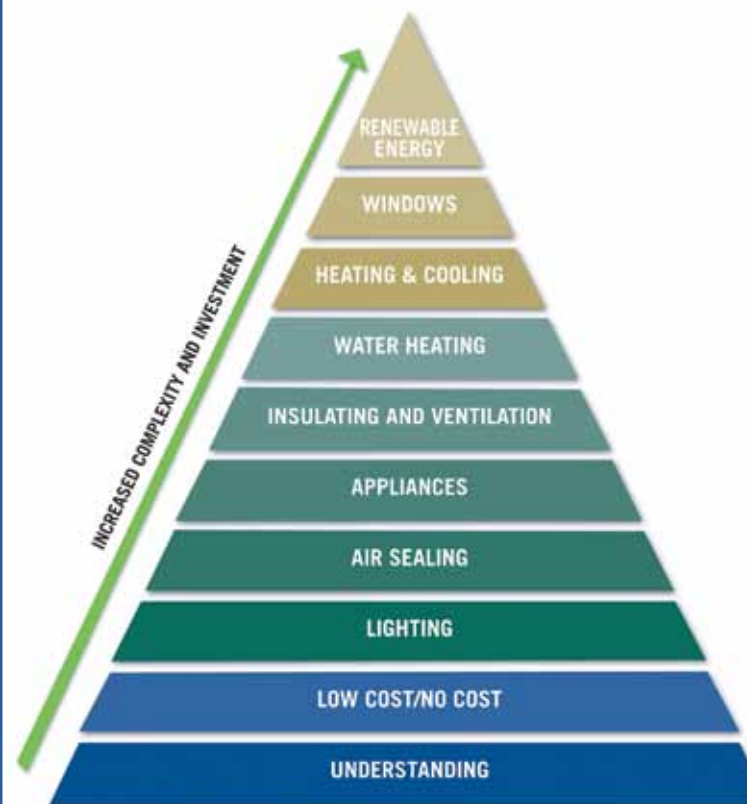
Learn how much energy your appliances are using by visiting www.energystar.gov or installing an electric usage monitor for a few days. It may be cost-effective to invest in newer, more efficient appliances.

Insulation & ventilation

Heating and cooling are expensive; don't let conditioned air escape. Use insulation with an

CONSERVATION PYRAMID

WHERE DO I BEGIN?



R value of 45 or more in the ceiling and attic, and 20 or more in the walls.

Water heating

Many manufacturers set water heaters at 140 degrees, but most households only need them set at 120 degrees. For each 10 degree reduction in water heater temperature, you can save three to five percent in energy costs.

Heating & cooling

Improve your efficiency by regularly replacing your furnace air filter, and research whether it is time for a more efficient furnace or air conditioner – or, better yet, a geothermal or air-source heat pump.

Windows

Old windows can dramatically reduce the efficiency of your heating and cooling equipment. New windows are a major investment, but will result in a more efficient home.

Renewable energy

Renewable energy systems are expensive. Once you have your home using energy as efficiently as possible, it might be time to consider generating your own electricity.



REBATES

Contact the Energy Experts® to see if a rebate is available for the energy-efficiency project at your home.
651-463-6243 • www.dakotaelectric.com

Hurry Up and Save!

It's the **perfect opportunity** to upgrade your home with an energy-efficient heating and cooling system by Bryant...plus get a **major tax break** too!

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Circuits Quick Clips



Nominating committee members sought

Dakota Electric's board of directors is seeking members interested in the future of Dakota Electric Association and willing to serve on a committee to select candidates for the 2011 director elections.

Responsibilities include reviewing candidate qualifications, completing candidate interviews and making final candidate recommendations. Depending on the number of candidates, Dakota Electric will attempt to schedule all interviews on one day. Interviews will take place Jan. 4 in the late afternoon and evening.

There will be a short orientation session prior to interviews on Jan. 4 to help acquaint nominating committee members with Dakota Electric's business and the skills needed for effective directors. Nominating committee members receive a per diem compensation plus mileage reimbursement for serving on the committee.

Dakota Electric members interested in serving on this committee should contact Cherry Jordan at 651-463-6252, 1-800-874-3409, ext. 252 or cjordan@dakotaelectric.com.

Application deadline is Nov. 17. Nominating committee members are selected by district through a random drawing held at the board of directors' regular meeting Nov. 18, 2010.



Increase reliability by trimming trees

Trees provide many benefits, such as shade in the summer.

But if trees are not properly maintained, those advantages can easily turn into drawbacks for your electrical reliability.

The weight of ice or the power of the wind can topple a tree or break a limb, and if that tree or limb hangs above a power

line, it can leave you without power. In fact, trees alone accounted for over 14 percent of Dakota Electric's unscheduled outages in 2009.

What you can do

1. Let us know if we need to trim a tree near a line in your yard by visiting www.dakotaelectric.com or calling 651-463-6287. Never trim a tree near a power line by yourself.
2. Plant trees appropriate distances from power lines. Visit www.dakotaelectric.com or call 651-463-6287 to request a tree-planting guide.

Our energy-conservation goal results

Dakota Electric's energy conservation goal for 2010 is to help members save 18.3 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity. As of Sept. 31, members have saved:

- 2.4 million kWh from residential HVAC programs
- 0.4 million kWh from residential water heating programs
- 1.5 million kWh from residential CFLs, LEDs and ENERGY STAR® light fixtures
- 1.2 million from residential ENERGY STAR appliance purchases and recycling
- Business members have saved 8 million kWh through energy-efficiency upgrades

Thank you for your commitment to energy efficiency!



Paid Advertisements: For more information about advertising in Circuits call 651-463-6270.

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Valid on service calls more than one hour. See dealer for details. Cannot be combined with other offers. Expires 11/30/10

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DAKOTA ELECTRIC
ASSOCIATION

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

a new light

on holiday traditions 2010 LED Holiday Lights Promotion

Save money on LEDs this season

Lighting accounts for about 20 percent of the electric bill in the average U.S. home. One of the easiest ways to start saving energy is to change your decorative light strings to LED (light emitting diode). If all decorative light strings sold in America this year were ENERGY STAR® qualified, we would save over a billion kWh per year and reduce greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to nearly 300,000 cars!

LEDs are exceptionally energy efficient and many use less than four percent the electricity of an incandescent bulb to produce the same amount of light. They can last up to 10 times longer and are available in a variety of colors, shapes and lengths.

Dakota Electric members have three ways to save on LED holiday light purchases through Dec. 24. See details on page one or visit www.dakotaelectric.com or call 651-463-6212.

Additional coupons were included in bill statements mailed Oct. 14 through Nov. 4.

Recycle your old lights at participating retailers. Visit www.mnbrighterideas.com for locations.

MANUFACTURERS COUPON EXPIRES DEC 24, 2010

VOID

on any ENERGY STAR® qualified brand LED Holiday lighting products

Consumer: Coupon valid only on your purchase of any GE brand LED Holiday Lights Product. You pay sales tax. Coupon may not be reproduced or combined with another offer and is non-transferable. Coupon may be exchanged, sold or reproduced. Offer limited to one use per household, its territories and military exchanges. Redemption: GE will reimburse you the face value plus 8¢ handling per coupon. You must present this coupon in accordance with GE's Redemption Policy. Void where prohibited. Cash value 1/100¢. For copy of policy and/or coupon redemption mail to: GE Consumer & Industrial Lighting Products, P.O. Box 880650, El Paso, TX 79968-0650.

Coupon expires: December 24, 2010 D209305 60001

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